



**TOMATO
AND BASIL
PIZZA**



**SCALLOPS
WITH
PESTO**



**DECADENT
TIRAMISÙ**

SAVEUR SPECIAL ISSUE

AUTHENTIC ITALIAN



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SAUCES

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DELICIOUS
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Full of Flavor*

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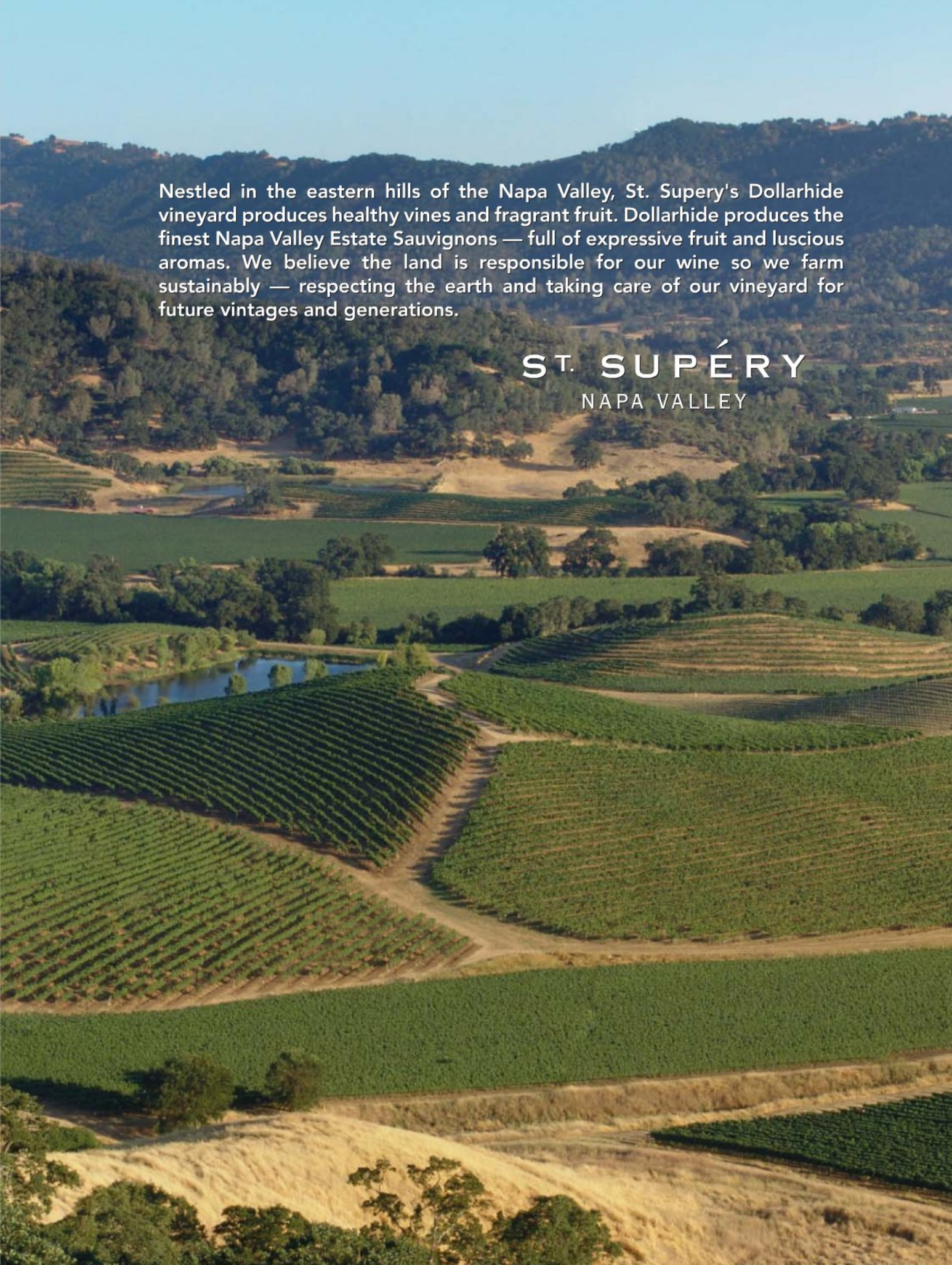
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SAVEUR SPECIAL ISSUE

AUTHENTIC ITALIAN

150 GREAT RECIPES

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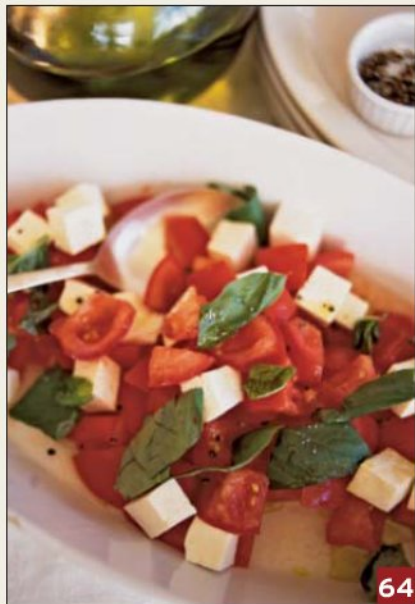
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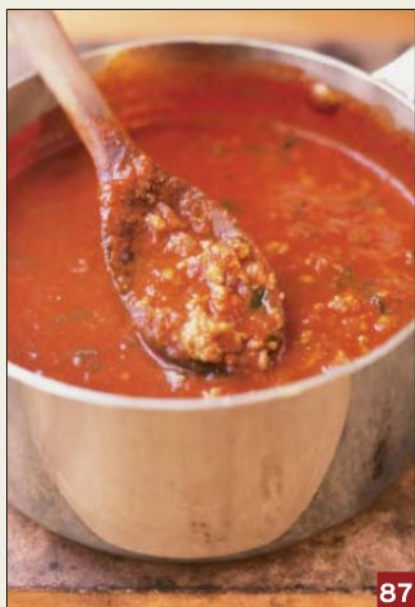
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COVER PHOTOS: LARRY NIGHSWANDER; TOP, LEFT TO RIGHT: CHRISTOPHER HIRSCHMEIER, ANTOINE BOOTZ, CHRISTOPHER HIRSCHMEIER

THE ITALIAN PANTRY

STOCKING YOUR KITCHEN pantry with a few basic but essential ingredients will be helpful in preparing the delicious recipes found in this book, but remember, the better the quality of the ingredients, the tastier and more authentic the result. You can find most of these items at your local grocer or specialty market; for hard-to-find items, check online or, better yet, the list of sources we've provided in this section under "Where to Buy".

ANCHOVIES Though often disparaged, anchovies cannot be ignored if you desire authentic Italian flavor—their slightly mysterious taste adds that extra-special something to many dishes. They are usually packed in oil or salt, but Sicily also produces "white anchovies," filleted and marinated in white vinegar. In a pinch you can use anchovy paste, which has a milder taste and is easy to find.

CANNED TOMATOES A gift to Europe from the New World, the tomato ("pomodoro" in Italian) didn't really take hold throughout Italy until the early 1900s, when canned tomatoes became widely available. They remain popular in Italian kitchens today, particularly the

exquisite san marzanos of Campania, which are considered the finest of all cooking tomatoes. These can be found at your local Italian grocer.

CAPERS These tasty little berries add a zesty punch to your favorite Italian dishes. The bud of a bush found in the Mediterranean, capers are available either pickled in vinegar or packed in salt. Wash well before using to remove the salty flavor of the brine.

CORNMEAL Polenta, a staple in northern Italy, is made with either coarse- or medium-textured cornmeal. Once considered a peasant food, polenta has recently started showing up in upscale restaurants and sophisticated recipes. Cornmeal will last for months if kept in a tightly closed container and stored in a cool, dry place.

HERBS AND SEASONINGS We can't imagine cooking Italian food without the classic herbs so strongly associated with the authentic dishes of Italy—basil, oregano, sage, rosemary, thyme, and parsley. Dried herbs have a much more robust and concentrated flavor, and should be used more sparingly than fresh herbs. Other important seasonings to have on hand are sea salt, whole black peppercorns, and red pepper flakes, which add just the right amount of heat.

LEGUMES The Italian love affair with beans dates to the early 1500s, when assortments of tasty legumes were introduced to Florence from the New World. Their popularity soared, and by the 17th century they were cultivated throughout Tuscany. An integral part of Italian cuisine—almost as fundamental as pasta—beans are central to hundreds of recipes. The most popular are the small white zolfino, or cannellini; fresh, delicate



favas; chickpeas (ceci); lentils (lenticchie); red and cream borlotti; and large black-eyed beans (toscanelli). Dried beans can be kept for weeks or even months if stored in a cool, dry place.

OLIVE OIL In Italy, olive oil is the lubricant of life, used for dressing salads, vegetables, cold fish, and more; for preserving mushrooms, anchovies, tuna and almost anything else worth saving for later; for deep-frying, shallow-frying, sautéing; as shortening for breads and pastries; even sometimes as medicine. Olive trees flourish in the sunny south, but some connoisseurs think that top Tuscan oils, peppery and full flavored, are the best of all. Wherever it is produced, extra-virgin olive oil, which comes from the first pressing of the olives, is known to be superior in taste.

OLIVES Italian olives, which grow from the northern shores of Lake Garda to the southern tip of Sicily, are among the world's finest. They come in both green and black varieties and are usually so good they are eaten by themselves.





PARMIGIANO-REGGIANO The ultimate Italian cheese is used throughout the peninsula and is essential to a host of classic dishes, from Liguria's pesto to Campania's eggplant parmigiano; it's also prized as Italy's finest table cheese, eaten in small firm chunks. Named for the cities of Parma and Reggio nell'Emilia, it is made only in a precisely defined area. Made from cow's milk, parmigiano-reggiano has a nutty, earthy flavor and a grain that feels like cornmeal in the mouth. When young (it must be aged at least a year), it is perfect for sauces; as it ages it is best eaten alone. Use the rind in soups and sauces to add flavor.

PASTA In its purest form, pasta—literally, “paste”—is simply flour mixed with water or eggs (and occasionally both), then cut or shaped into various forms, and usually dried. In its earliest days pasta was probably made fresh to order, but by the 13th century dried pasta became more commonplace due to its long

shelf life. It wasn't until the 20th century that pasta became a staple of Italian cooking, but today, mention Italian cuisine and it's usually the first thing comes to mind. Choose pasta imported from Italy, especially products made from semolina flour. Egg pasta is best made from scratch, though you can buy it dried in a pinch.

PROSCIUTTO What we (and Italians themselves) commonly call prosciutto is actually prosciutto crudo, raw (but cured) ham; the most famous bears the appellation “di Parma,” meaning that, while the pigs might be raised in different regions, the meat must be cured in the province of Parma. At its best, prosciutto di Parma is rosy-hued and silky in texture, with a spicy aroma and slightly salty, earthy-sweet flavor. Whether eaten by itself or used judiciously in cooking, it is one of Italy's great culinary treats.

RICE Italian cooking makes excellent use of the high-quality, short, plump grains cultivated in Lombardy, Piedmont and Veneto, which are categorized into four groups based on grain size: comune, semifino, fino, and superfino. Carnaroli, classified as superfino, is the preferred variety for making risotto, due to its high starch content. Look for *ai pestelli* on the package, which means the grains were hulled with a mechanical mortar and pestle that leaves the rice covered with a powdery starch—important in making the creamy texture one finds in risotto. Never wash the rice before cooking, as this would remove the needed starch from the grain.

SEMOLINA FLOUR Produced from durum wheat, this pale yellow flour, which is available either coarsely or finely ground, is used primarily for pasta due to its high content of protein and gluten, but is sometimes used for gnocchi and assorted breads and pastries.

WINE AND VINEGAR Wine is produced in every region of Italy, and though most of it is everyday stuff, drunk with no ceremony, there are a few treasures: Piedmont's complex barolos and barbarescos; sensuous, earthy Tuscan chian-

tis and brunellos; the fragrant, mineraly whites of Friuli and the Veneto; and the sun-drenched sweet wines made in Sicily. Where there is wine, of course, there is vinegar—which is not wine gone bad but rather wine taken in a different direction, acetified and honed to sharpness. Italians favor vinegar as a medium of preservation, especially for cooked vegetables and fish, and also as a basis for dressing salads. True balsamic vinegar can be pricey, so use the inexpensive stuff for salad dressings and cooking and save the 25-year-old bottle to drizzle on special dishes.

WHERE TO BUY

Buoni Italia Importer of fine Italian foods; buoniitalia.com; 212/633-9090.

Corti Brothers A specialty grocery store featuring unique wine and foods from Italy; cortibros.biz; 800/509-3663.

Formaggio Kitchen Unique gourmet store offering artisanal cheeses and charcuterie, pantry staples, and hard-to-find spices; formaggio-kitchen.com; 888/212-3224.

Romanengo Confections Traditional manufacturer of Italian candied fruits, chocolates, dragées, bonbons, and preserves; romanengo.com.

Republic of Beans Importer of Italian heirloom beans, as well as other foods and spices; republicofbeans.com; 212/982-8274.

Urbani Truffles Importer of high-quality truffles; urbanitruffles.com; 800/281-2330.



ANTIPASTI

(Appetizers)



SALT COD CAKE ON GRILLED TOAST

(*Crostini di Baccalà*)

SERVES 6 – 8

SALTING COD WAS an inexpensive and easy way to preserve the fish without refrigeration. Now it's found in gourmet specialty stores and in Italian, Portuguese, and other ethnic markets.

- 1 lb. thick, boneless, skinless dried salt cod (cortibros.biz; 800/509-3663)
- 2 cups milk
- 4 cloves garlic, crushed and peeled
- 1 large yukon gold potato
- 1/2 cup heavy cream
- 1/2 cup extra-virgin olive oil
- Sea salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 12 thick slices ciabatta or other country-style bread, grilled

1. Soak salt cod in a large bowl of cold water in the refrigerator for 3 days, changing water every 12 hours. Drain, pat dry, and cut into 3"–4" pieces. Bring milk and half the garlic just to a boil in a medium pot over medium-high heat. Reduce heat to medium-low, add salt cod, and simmer until tender, 35–40 minutes.

2. Steam potato in a steamer basket set over a pot of boiling water until soft, 35–40 minutes. Peel potato. Set aside.

3. Remove pot with salt cod from heat and let fish cool in milk. Transfer fish to a large bowl. Strain milk into a small bowl, discarding garlic. Coarsely flake fish, discarding any stray bones and skin.

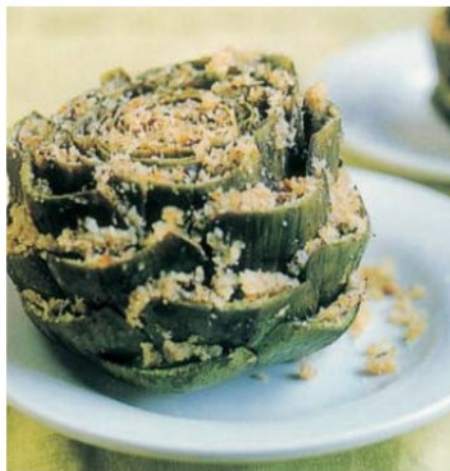
4. Bring cream and remaining garlic to a simmer in a small pot over medium-low heat. Simmer for 10 minutes, then set aside to let cool. Mash garlic in pot with cream with a fork.

5. Put potato into a large bowl and mash with a fork. Add cream and mashed garlic, flaked salt cod, and half the oil and mix with a wooden spoon until well

combined but not smooth in texture. Mixture should be just moist enough to hold together when shaped into a 4"–5" patty. If it is too dry, stir in some of the milk, 1 tbsp. at a time. Season to taste with salt and pepper.

6. Shape cod mixture into twelve 4"–5"-long oval patties and put on a sheet pan. Cover and refrigerate until chilled, 20–30 minutes.

7. Heat 2 tbsp. of the oil in a large non-stick skillet over medium heat. Working in batches, cook fish cakes until golden brown on each side, 2–3 minutes per side, adding remaining oil to skillet as needed. Put salt cod cakes on top of bread slices. Serve on a platter garnished with dandelion greens or other bitter greens, if you like.



STUFFED ARTICHOKE

SERVES 4

THESE ARTICHOKEs make the perfect start to any meal. To make the homemade bread crumbs called for in this preparation, take two or three 1/2"-thick slices of Italian bread, slice off the crusts, and process the bread in a food processor until finely chopped.

- 1 1/4 cups homemade plain bread crumbs
- 3 tbsp. freshly grated pecorino romano
- 1/2 cup freshly grated parmigiano-reggiano
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 2 tbsp. chopped fresh mint
- 3 tbsp. chopped flat-leaf parsley
- Salt, preferably kosher
- Freshly ground black pepper

- 1/2 cup extra-virgin olive oil
- 4 large artichokes

1. In a medium-size bowl, combine the bread crumbs, pecorino, parmigiano-reggiano, garlic, mint, parsley, and salt and pepper to taste. Mix thoroughly. Add the olive oil in a slow stream, stirring continuously.

2. Cut about 3/4" off the tops of the artichokes and snip off the remaining pointy tips. Cut the stems off so that the artichokes will sit without toppling over. Pry open the artichoke leaves and fill the spaces with the bread-crumble mixture.

3. Place the artichokes in a pot that will hold them snugly. Add water to a depth of 1". Bring to a boil, cover, and reduce heat to medium-low. Simmer for 30–45 minutes, depending on the size of the artichokes. Test for doneness by pulling out a leaf and tasting for tenderness. Serve hot or at room temperature.

VEAL WITH TUNA SAUCE

(*Vitello Tonnato*)

SERVES 6 – 8

THIS IS A CLASSIC summer dish in Italy. Use extra-virgin olive oil if you're making your own mayonnaise, or whisk a little into the prepared variety to add a more fruity flavor.



FOR THE VEAL:

- 2½ lbs. lean veal roast, preferably top round, firmly trussed
- 1 medium carrot, peeled and chopped
- 1 stalk celery, without leaves, chopped
- 1 medium onion, chopped
- 4 sprigs Italian parsley
- 1 dried bay leaf

FOR THE SAUCE:

- 1 7-oz. can imported tuna, packed in olive oil
- 5 flat anchovy filets
- 1 cup extra-virgin olive oil
- 3 tsp. lemon juice, freshly squeezed
- 3 tbsp. capers, soaked and rinsed
- 1¼ cups mayonnaise

SUGGESTED GARNISHES:

- Thin slices of lemon
- Pitted black olives, slivered
- Whole capers
- Whole Italian parsley leaves
- Anchovy filets

1. FOR THE VEAL: Put veal in a deep heavy pan. Add carrots, celery, onions, parsley, bay leaf, and enough water to cover. Remove meat and set it aside. Cover pan, bring water to a boil, then add veal. Return to a boil, cover, reduce heat, and gently simmer for 2 hours. Add more water if necessary. Remove from heat, set aside, and allow meat to cool in the stock.

2. FOR THE SAUCE: Drain tuna and put into a food processor with anchovies, olive oil, lemon juice, and capers. Process until it becomes a creamy, beige-colored sauce. Fold sauce gently, but thoroughly, into mayonnaise. If made ahead of time, refrigerate.

3. TO ASSEMBLE: When meat is cool, transfer to a cutting board. Remove trussing strings, and carefully cut into uniformly thin slices.

4. Spread some of the tuna sauce on bottom of a platter. Over it, lay a single layer of veal slices, edge to edge, without overlapping; cover with sauce. Repeat layering, ending with sauce.

5. Cover veal with plastic wrap and refrigerate for at least 24 hours. (It will keep for at least a week.) Bring to room temperature before serving. Use a spatula to smooth the top, and garnish with some or all of the suggested garnishes.



MEAT-STUFFED OLIVES ASCOLI STYLE

(*Olive all'Ascolana*)

MAKES 24–30

THIS DISH ORIGINATED in the Ascoli region of Italy and is a true olive lover's delight. Any variety of large, mild green olives may be used for this dish.

- 1 tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil
- 2 tbsp. finely chopped, peeled yellow onion
- 3 oz. ground chicken
- 2 oz. lean ground veal
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 1 tbsp. sweet marsala
- ¼ tsp. tomato paste
- ½ tsp. finely grated lemon zest
- 1 egg white, lightly beaten
- 1 tsp. finely chopped fresh parsley
- Pinch freshly grated nutmeg
- 30 large mild green olives, such as bella di cerignola
- Vegetable oil
- 3 eggs, well beaten
- 2 cups dried bread crumbs

1. Heat olive oil in a medium skillet over medium heat. Add onions and cook until just browned, about 2 minutes. Add chicken and veal, season to taste with salt

and pepper, and cook, breaking up meat with a fork, for 2–3 minutes.

2. Add sweet marsala, cover, and cook until liquid evaporates, about 3 minutes. Stir in tomato paste and 2 tsp. water, cover, and cook for 3–4 minutes. Set aside to cool.

3. Finely mince meat mixture, transfer to a bowl, and add lemon zest, egg white, parsley, and nutmeg. Mix well. Adjust seasonings. Set filling aside.

4. Using a small, sharp knife, pit olives by paring away flesh as you would peel a thick-skinned orange, in one long, continuous curl from end to end, discarding pits. Stuff each olive with about 1 tsp. of the meat filling, gently squeezing olive flesh around filling to seal and re-form olive shape, then set aside.

5. Pour vegetable oil into a skillet to a depth of ½" and heat over medium heat until hot but not smoking. Meanwhile, dip 1 olive at a time into beaten eggs to coat, then dredge in bread crumbs. Fry olives in batches, turning once, until golden brown, about 1 minute. Transfer olives with a slotted spoon to paper towels to drain. Serve hot.

DEEP-FRIED CELERY HEARTS, SQUID, AND LEMON SLICES WITH AÏOLI

(*Piccolo Fritto*)

SERVES 4

PICCOLO FRITTO (little fry), is a smaller version of the classic Italian fritto misto (mixed fry) of bite-size foods.

FOR THE AÏOLI:

- 1 large clove garlic, peeled and cut into a few pieces
- 2–3 pinches salt
- 1 egg yolk
- ½ cup mild olive oil

FOR THE FRITTO:

- 2 quarts peanut oil
- 1 cup buttermilk



2 cups flour

1/2 cup semolina

1 celery heart, root end trimmed,
stalks separated, and only pliable
1/2"-wide 4"-long stalks reserved

1 large lemon, scrubbed in hot water,
thinly sliced, seeds removed, and
ends discarded

1 lb. whole squid, cleaned, body cut
into 1/3"-wide rings, tentacles left
whole

Salt

1. FOR THE AIOLI: Pound garlic with a mortar and pestle. Add salt and smash the last solid bits of garlic. Add egg yolk and stir with the pestle to amalgamate the mixture. Using the pestle, work in oil, a cautious trickle or a few drops at first, then gradually increasing the flow as the yolk becomes tacky and opaque. As the yolk reaches saturation, the mixture will make a satisfying clucking sound. Adding a few drops of water to the aioli will whiten and soften it, allowing you to add more oil, which you may choose to do if you find the garlic remains too aggressive.

2. FOR THE FRITTO: Heat oil in a large heavy pot over medium heat until temperature reaches 365°–370° on a candy thermometer. Meanwhile, pour buttermilk into a wide shallow bowl and set aside. Combine flour and semolina in a wide shallow pan and set aside. Line two large sheet pans with parchment paper and set aside. Dip celery into buttermilk, then transfer, dripping, to the flour mixture. “Shimmy” the breading pan so that the pieces settle, coating their sides, then flip each piece to coat other side. Lift out breaded celery, tap to remove excess flour, then transfer to prepared sheet pan without stacking. (This simple coating is never uniform and does not need to be. Ideally, the breading will have wrinkles and some barely coated spots.) Repeat breading process with lemons, then with squid.

3. Add a few pieces of batter-coated celery at a time to the hot oil without crowding. Fry celery, undisturbed, until a pale golden crust sets, 1 1/2–2 minutes. Using tongs, very gently turn any pieces that won’t otherwise brown on the top. Don’t

fuss with the frying food; the fragile breading must stay integral, or the fritto will go limp and become greasy. Once golden, lift out the pieces with tongs or a mesh skimmer, dangle them briefly over the oil to let drip, then set gently on paper towels to let drain. Repeat frying process with lemons, then with squid, frying lemons for 45–60 seconds, squid rings for 1–1 1/2 minutes, and tentacles for 45 seconds.

4. Season fritto lightly all over with salt, divide among four warm paper napkin-lined plates, and serve with aioli.



MONTASIO CHEESE CRISPS

(Frico)

MAKES 10 CRISPS

WE GOT THIS RECIPE from a New York restaurateur who grew up eating this irresistible fried-cheese snack in her hometown of Pula, Croatia, which was once part of Italy. Frico may be stuffed with a variety of fillings. When

making this simple version, we added a little flour to help it hold its shape.

1/2 lb. (about 2 cups) grated montasio
(or asiago) cheese

1 tbsp. flour

Extra-virgin olive oil

1. Combine cheese with flour in a medium bowl. Mix thoroughly.

2. Lightly grease a large cast-iron skillet with extra-virgin olive oil, then place over medium-low heat. Spoon 2 tbsp. of cheese onto heated skillet to make each 2"–3" crisp.

3. Allow cheese to melt and edges to turn golden brown. Cook, without touching, for about 3 minutes, then turn with a spatula (when ready, frico should come away easily from pan) and continue cooking for 2 minutes.

4. Drain on paper towels. Repeat with remaining cheese. Serve at room temperature.



CHRISTOPHER HIRSHEIMER



METHOD

Deep-Fried Treviso

Serves 4

This is an Italian version of tempura. The batter is also delicious for artichoke hearts as well as radicchio.

Pour vegetable oil into a medium-deep pot to a depth of 3". Heat over medium-high heat until hot, about 375° on a candy thermometer. Meanwhile, put 3 cups flour into a medium bowl and whisk in 2¾ cups water or beer until smooth. Season to taste with salt and freshly ground black pepper. Quarter 3 heads treviso lengthwise. Working with a few pieces at a time, dip treviso in batter, then deep-fry until crisp and golden, about 1½ minutes per side. Transfer treviso with tongs to paper towels to let drain. Season generously with coarse salt.

SPIDER CRAB WITH ZUCCHINI AND ARTICHOKE

(Grancevola con Zucchini e Carciofi)

SERVES 4

SPIDER CRAB (*maja squinado*) is very highly regarded in and around Venice. It is often served simply dressed with olive oil, but a local fishing captain remembered this preparation from his childhood, and made it for us when we went out on his boat one evening.

- 6 small artichokes
- 7 tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil
- 2 medium zucchini, trimmed and sliced into thin rounds
- 1 scallion, trimmed and minced
- 2 cups fresh bread crumbs
- 2 sprigs fresh thyme, leaves minced
- ¼ bunch parsley, trimmed and chopped
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 1 lb. jumbo lump crabmeat
- Juice of 1 lemon

1. Pull off the tough green outer leaves of the artichokes until you reach the tender, mostly yellow leaves. Trim stems and slice about 1" off top of artichokes. Spread open leaves and scoop out fibrous white chokes with a spoon. Slice artichokes lengthwise into thin wedges.

2. Heat 4 tbsp. of the oil in a large skillet over medium-high heat. Add artichokes and cook, stirring often, until lightly browned, about 5 minutes. Add zucchini and scallions and cook until zucchini is lightly browned, about 3 minutes. Reduce heat to medium-low, cover, and cook until vegetables are soft, about 10 minutes.

3. Meanwhile, combine bread crumbs, thyme, remaining 3 tbsp. of the oil, and half the parsley in a medium bowl. Season to taste with salt and pepper and set aside. Pick through crabmeat, removing any bits of shell, and set aside.

4. Preheat broiler and set rack about 4" from the heat. When vegetables are soft,

increase heat to medium, add crabmeat and remaining parsley to skillet, and season to taste with salt and pepper. Cook, stirring gently, until crabmeat is warmed through, about 3 minutes, taking care not to break up crabmeat lumps. Remove from heat and stir in lemon juice. Adjust seasonings.

5. Divide crabmeat among four individual gratin dishes. Cover each with a generous handful of the bread crumb mixture, then broil until browned, 1–2 minutes.

DUCK BRESAOLA WITH BORLOTTI AND RED ONION JAM

SERVES 4

YOU'LL WANT TO CLEAR some space in your refrigerator to accommodate this three-week-plus home-curing exercise. Canned borlotti beans are available in Italian and upscale markets.

FOR THE BRESAOLA:

- 3 tbsp. kosher salt
- 3 tbsp. freshly ground black pepper
- 1 tbsp. sugar
- 1 tbsp. hot red pepper flakes
- 1 tbsp. chopped fresh rosemary leaves
- 1 tbsp. chopped fresh thyme leaves
- 1 whole (2-lb.) duck breast

FOR THE JAM:

- 2 tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil, plus more for drizzling
- 2 red onions, cut into ¼" dice
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 1 cup fresh orange juice

- 1 10-oz. can borlotti beans, rinsed and drained
- 4 tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil
- 2 garlic cloves, thinly sliced
- ½ tsp. hot red pepper flakes
- ¼ cup red wine vinegar

1. FOR THE BRESAOLA: In a small bowl, combine salt, black pepper, sugar,



red pepper, rosemary, and thyme. Rub duck breast with this mixture, wrap loosely in wax paper, and refrigerate for 4 days. Unwrap breast, then wrap like a package with string, leaving one long end. Suspend breast from a shelf in your refrigerator for 3 weeks.

2. FOR THE JAM: In a 12"–14" sauté pan, heat 2 tbsp. of the olive oil over high heat until hot but not smoking. Add onions and cook over low heat until softened and just slightly golden brown. Season with salt and pepper and add orange juice. Continue to cook, stirring occasionally, until juice has reduced and completely coats onions and onions are falling apart, adding a little water if necessary to keep onions from sticking. This should take about 20 minutes. Season again with salt and pepper, if necessary, and set aside to cool.

3. TO ASSEMBLE: In a mixing bowl, gently stir together beans, olive oil, garlic, red pepper, and vinegar until well mixed, and set aside for 1 hour.

4. Slice the bresaola very thin with a sharp knife or on a slicer. Arrange some of the slices on each of four chilled dinner plates. Remove beans from their bath with a slotted spoon and divide them evenly among plates. Finish each plate with a dab of onion jam and sprinkle with parsley. Serve immediately.



GRATINÉED LARGE GRAY SHRIMP (*Gamberoni Grigi al Gratin*)

SERVES 8

THIS ITALIAN SPECIALTY was shared with us by a Venice fishmonger who invited us for a "typical weekend meal."

6 slices stale white bread, crusts removed
 1/4 cup finely chopped basil
 1 clove garlic, peeled and minced
 1 tbsp. grated parmigiano-reggiano
 3–4 tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil
 Salt and freshly ground black pepper
 24 large whole shrimp, legs removed, shells on
 1/2 cup tocai friulano or other dry Friuli white wine

1. Preheat oven to 400°. Tear bread into pieces and put in bowl of food processor fitted with a steel blade, then pulse to coarse crumbs. Transfer to a medium bowl and add basil, garlic, and grated cheese. Toss with oil and season to taste with salt and pepper. Set aside.

2. To butterfly shrimp, make a deep incision with the tip of a sharp knife in the back just below the head, and slice down to the tail, cutting through the shell and about halfway through the meat. Spread incision open and flatten shrimp slightly with your fingertips.

3. Stuff each shrimp with some of the reserved bread crumb mixture, then moisten each with about 1 tsp. wine. Arrange shrimp on a baking sheet and bake in upper third of oven for 10 minutes. Switch oven setting to broil, and broil shrimp until bread crumb mixture is browned, about 5 minutes.

CARPACCIO

SERVES 6

TODAY, ALMOST anything thinly sliced is called "carpaccio," but the name of this 1950 Harry's Bar creation originally referred to its color: Some say the dish was named for the great Venetian painter Vittorino Carpaccio, noted for his reds and whites.

FOR THE SAUCE:

1 egg yolk
 1 tsp. white wine vinegar or red wine vinegar
 2 pinches dry mustard
 Salt and freshly ground white pepper
 3/4 cup olive oil
 Juice of 1/2 lemon
 1–2 dashes worcestershire sauce, or to taste
 1 1/2 tsp. milk

FOR THE CARPACCIO:

1 1/2 lbs. boned shell of beef, trimmed of all fat, sinew, and gristle

1. FOR THE SAUCE: Make a mayonnaise by putting egg yolk, vinegar, mustard, and a little salt and pepper in a medium mixing bowl and whisking until foamy and thoroughly blended. Add 1/4 cup of the oil drop by drop, whisking constantly. Gradually add the rest of the oil in a thin, steady stream, continuing to whisk as the mayonnaise thickens. Add 1 tbsp. of the lemon juice, or to taste, and adjust seasonings, whisking in a little beef or chicken broth (or water) to thin the mayonnaise, if you like.

2. Put 1/2 cup mayonnaise (reserve the rest for another use) in a small mixing bowl;

whisk in worcestershire and $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp. of the lemon juice, then enough milk to make a thin sauce that just coats the back of a wooden spoon. Season to taste with salt and pepper, and add a little more worcestershire and/or lemon juice, if you like.

3. TO ASSEMBLE: Make sure the beef is very cold, then slice into the thinnest possible slices, using a razor-sharp, long-bladed slicing knife. It will take several slices before you will be able to get thin, even slices. Divide slices among six small chilled plates, arranging them in one thin layer, covering the surface completely.

Drizzle some of the sauce over meat on each plate and serve immediately.

CHICKEN LIVER CANAPÉS (*Crostini Toscani*)

MAKES 50

THESE “LITTLE CRUSTS”—also made with puréed mushrooms, tomato sauce, and other toppings—are popular Tuscan snacks and hors d’oeuvres.

3 tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil
2 tbsp. butter

1 lb. chicken livers, veins removed
1 small yellow onion, peeled and finely chopped
1 small carrot, peeled, trimmed, and finely chopped
Salt and freshly ground black pepper
1 tbsp. capers, drained
1 tbsp. anchovy paste
 $\frac{1}{4}$ cup chicken stock
50 thinly sliced 2" squares country bread, lightly toasted

1. Put oil and butter into a large skillet and heat over medium heat until butter melts. Add chicken livers, onions, and carrots and cook, stirring often with a wooden spoon, until livers are cooked through and vegetables are lightly browned, about 20 minutes. Season to taste with salt and pepper.

2. Transfer liver mixture to a blender and blend to a coarse paste, about 15 seconds. Add capers and anchovy paste and blend about 15 seconds more. Add stock and blend to a smooth purée, about 1 minute more.

3. Scrape liver purée into a medium bowl using a rubber spatula. Cover surface of purée with plastic wrap to prevent a skin from forming, then refrigerate until cool, about 2 hours. Bring liver purée to room temperature before spreading on toast.

SCALLOPS WITH PESTO (*Cappesante al Pesto*)

SERVES 8

THIS SIMPLE BUT delicious recipe was inspired by Ed Giobbi, author of *Italian Family Cooking* (Random House, 1971).

2 tbsp. pine nuts
Salt
2 cloves garlic, peeled
2 cups packed fresh basil leaves
 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup extra-virgin olive oil
2 tbsp. freshly grated parmigiano-reggiano
Freshly ground black pepper
24 large sea scallops, muscles removed
2 tbsp. butter





1. Pulse pine nuts and $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. salt together in a food processor until finely ground. Add garlic and basil and, with the motor running, drizzle in olive oil. Add parmigiano-reggiano, and process into a smooth paste. Season to taste with salt and pepper.

2. Season scallops with salt and pepper. Heat a skillet over medium-high heat, then add butter. When butter begins to brown, add scallops and sear until golden, $1\frac{1}{2}$ –2 minutes. Turn scallops and cook until opaque, $1\frac{1}{2}$ –2 minutes more.

3. Spoon pesto onto eight plates, then set 3 scallops in pesto on each plate.

PORCINI CAPS STUFFED WITH CHEESE AND HAM

(*Teste di Porcini alla Luculliana*)

SERVES 4

CHEF CARLO ARMELLINO of Veneto, Italy, named this dish for Lucullus, a legendary Roman gourmand. Fresh porcini can be found at your local specialty market.

- 8 large porcini mushrooms, wiped clean (or substitute cremini mushrooms)
- 2 tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 clove garlic, peeled and minced
- $\frac{1}{3}$ cup chopped fresh parsley
- 4 oz. finely chopped boiled ham
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 4 oz. taleggio, rind removed, finely chopped
- 12 leaves fresh basil, minced
- 4 tsp. grated parmigiano-reggiano

1. Preheat oven to 375°. Separate mushroom caps from stems. Finely chop stems. Steam caps for about 3 minutes in a steamer basket set over boiling water over medium heat. Transfer caps to a baking pan.

2. Heat oil in a sauté pan over medium heat. Add mushroom stems, garlic, parsley, and ham. Season to taste with

salt and pepper and cook, stirring, about 5 minutes. Remove from heat and add taleggio and basil to mixture. Mix well.

3. Fill mushroom caps with cheese mixture and sprinkle with parmigiano-reggiano. Bake until cheese melts and mushrooms soften, about 15 minutes. Garnish with chopped basil, if you like.

METHOD

Grilled Aged Provolone

(*Provoleta*)

Serves 4

This dish is one example of the culinary influence Italy had on Buenos Aires. Provoleta is Argentine provolone that has been aged for at least 30 days.

Preheat a hardwood charcoal grill. Cut 2 lbs. room-temperature provoletta crosswise into 4 thick rounds. Brush both sides of each piece of cheese with extra-virgin olive oil. Put cheese on grill over hot coals and grill until it is lightly browned and melted on the outside and just soft in the center, 2–3 minutes per side. Transfer cheese to four serving plates as done and sprinkle each with a pinch of dried oregano. Serve with grilled sausage, if you like.

ROSE PISTOLA'S CALAMARI CAKES

SERVES 4

THIS RECIPE MAKES good use of the squid tentacles left over when making a dish that only uses the bodies. We picked up this trick from the legendary “old stove,” Rose Pistola, for whom the dish is named. She dubbed it “ordinary,” but we beg to differ—a dish this delicious can only be described as extraordinary.

- 1 cup cleaned squid tentacles
- 2 cups fresh bread crumbs
- 4 tbsp. Three-Cheese Mixture (see recipe, p. 91)
- 4 cloves garlic, minced
- 4 tbsp. finely chopped parsley
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper

- 1 egg
- 4 tbsp. olive oil

1. Place tentacles in a food processor, then pulse 6 times for a finely chopped consistency. Transfer to a bowl; add bread crumbs, cheese, garlic, 3 tbsp. of the parsley, salt and pepper to taste, and egg. Mix well.

2. Wet hands to prevent mixture from sticking. Form several round “cakes” 2”–3” wide. Fry cakes in hot oil in a large skillet for about 3 minutes per side or until browned. Drain on paper towels. To serve, garnish with remaining parsley.

TRUE CLAMS IN GINGER SAUCE

(*Vongole Veraci allo Zenzero*)

SERVES 4

WHILE VISITING VENICE we happened upon a tiny trattoria named Alle Testiere, which turned out some of the best shellfish dishes we’ve ever had. Luckily, they shared the recipes of our favorites, including this one.

- 1 clove garlic, peeled and minced
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup extra-virgin olive oil
- 3 lbs. manila or littleneck clams, scrubbed
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup tocai friulano or other dry Friuli white wine
- 1 1” piece fresh ginger, peeled and grated on the large holes of a box grater
- 4 sprigs parsley, trimmed and minced

1. Place garlic, oil, clams, and $\frac{1}{2}$ cup water in a large skillet over medium-high heat. Cover the skillet and cook, shaking skillet over the heat several times, for 3–4 minutes.

2. Add wine and ginger and continue cooking, uncovered, until clams have opened, about 3 minutes more, discarding those that remain closed.

3. Transfer clams and broth to a serving platter, and garnish with parsley. Serve with lemon wedges, if you like.

PANI, PIZZA & TORTE

(Breads, Pizza & Tarts)



MARGHERITA TOPPING

FOR 2 12" PIZZAS

RIPE TOMATOES are best for the sauce; if your tomatoes lack flavor, add tomato purée.

- 2 lbs. very ripe fresh plum tomatoes
- Salt
- 16 small fresh basil leaves (or larger ones torn into pieces)
- 1/4 cup extra-virgin olive oil
- 1/2 cup tomato purée (optional)
- 1/2 lb. fresh mozzarella, sliced

1. Drop tomatoes in a medium pot of boiling water for 10 seconds, then cool in a bowl of cold water. Slice off tops, slip off skins, and squeeze out seeds. Finely chop tomatoes.

2. Place tomatoes in a colander, sprinkle with salt, and drain for 20 minutes. Transfer to a medium bowl, stir in basil and olive oil (and tomato purée, if needed), and adjust seasoning. Spread tomato mixture evenly over pizza dough (see Master Pizza Dough recipe, this page), place mozzarella slices on top, and bake at highest setting for 12–15 minutes.

MARINARA TOPPING

FOR 2 12" PIZZAS

A CLASSIC NEAPOLITAN pizza topping, marinara takes its name from the *marinai*, or sailors, for whom it was first baked in the 18th century.

- 2 lbs. very ripe fresh plum tomatoes
- Salt
- 1/4 cup extra-virgin olive oil
- 1/2 cup tomato purée (optional)
- 4 small garlic cloves, peeled and minced
- 2 sprigs fresh oregano, leaves only

1. Drop tomatoes in a medium pot of boiling water for 10 seconds, then cool in a bowl of cold water. Slice off tops, slip off skins, and squeeze out seeds. Finely chop tomatoes.

2. Place tomatoes in a colander, sprinkle with salt, and drain for 20 minutes. Transfer to a medium bowl, stir in olive oil (and tomato purée, if needed), and adjust seasoning. Spread tomato mixture evenly over pizza dough (see Master Pizza Dough recipe, this page), sprinkle garlic and oregano on top, and bake at highest setting for 12–15 minutes.

MASTER PIZZA DOUGH

MAKES 2 12" PIZZAS

WE DEVELOPED THIS recipe by watching a real Neapolitan pizzaiuoli (pizza maker) at work in a New York pizzeria.

- 1 7-gram packet active dry yeast
- 1 1/2 cups all-purpose flour
- 1 1/2 cups cake flour
- 1 tsp. salt
- Extra-virgin olive oil
- 1/2 cup cornmeal

1. Dissolve yeast in 1/4 cup lukewarm water in a large bowl. Set aside until yeast begins to activate (it will foam a little), about 10 minutes. Combine flours and salt in a small bowl. Set aside.

2. Add 1 cup flour mixture to yeast and stir well with a wooden spoon or your hands. Mix in 1/2 cup water, then add another cup flour mixture and continue to stir. Add remaining 1 cup flour mixture, then gradually stir in about 1/4 cup water and mix well. The dough should be fairly soft, but not too wet.

3. Turn out dough on a lightly floured work surface and knead with the heels of your palms until it has a smooth, uniform texture, about 10–12 minutes. Divide dough into 2 even balls. Coat the insides of two medium bowls with 1/2 tsp. olive oil each. Place dough in bowls, cover bowls with damp cloths or plastic wrap, and set aside to rise until doubled in bulk, about 2 1/2–3 hours.

4. Place pizza stone or unglazed tile in oven and preheat at highest setting (not broil). Sprinkle a baker's peel or inverted baking sheet with cornmeal. Punch down dough from one bowl, make a ball, and flatten it on the pan. Taking care not to overwork dough,



METHOD

Secrets of a Pizza Oven

Pizza can be made in any kind of oven. But unless the oven is built with special firebricks and fueled with oak or beech wood, the pizza will never be authentically Neapolitan. The classic Neapolitan pizza oven is shaped like a cross between a volcano and a beehive, with a hollow bottom to hold logs and shavings, and is usually faced with tiny, colorful tiles. A fire is built in the oven, and when the wood is reduced to embers, it is pushed to one side. Just before a pizza goes in, wood shavings are thrown onto the embers, creating the smoke that perfumes the pizza. If properly maintained, these ovens last for decades, but the bricks that make up the cooking surface can sometimes be changed as often as every two to three years. We were told that you can count the real Neapolitan pizza-oven builders on one hand. They pass secrets down from father to son. When they install or repair your oven, they come at 5:00 a.m. and tell you to stay away. Most old pizza masters are equally secretive about who builds their ovens—but we did learn that the supplier of their R960 firebricks is a company called Rinaldi in Salerno.

stretch it into a thin 12" circle with a slightly raised edge. Add Margherita or Marinara Topping (see recipes, this page) and slide onto hot pizza stone.

5. Bake until crust is golden brown and crisp, about 12–15 minutes. Meanwhile, prepare second pizza. Remove first pizza from oven and bake the second on the same stone. Drizzle a little olive oil on each and serve.



BREAD WITH PROSCIUTTO AND OLIVES

(*Torta Salata Pasquale*)

SERVES 12

THIS RECIPE IS a savory alternative to pizza pasquale, the sweet bread traditionally served with salame on Easter morning.

- 3 3/4 cups flour
- 1 1/2 tbsp. baking powder
- 3/4 cup olive oil
- 1 1/4 cups dry white wine
- 6 eggs
- 1/4 lb. prosciutto
- 1/4 lb. mortadella
- 1 cup sliced pitted black olives (preferably Italian, such as gaeta)
- 1/2 cup grated parmigiano-reggiano
- Freshly ground black pepper

1. Preheat oven to 350°. Grease and flour an 8 1/2" × 11" cake pan.

2. Sift flour and baking powder together into a large mixing bowl. Make a well in the center and add olive oil, wine, and 1/2 cup water. Stir with a fork until well blended.

3. Beat eggs in another mixing bowl and stir into flour mixture.

4. Slice prosciutto and mortadella into short strips and add to batter with olives and parmigiano-reggiano. Season with pepper, pour into pan, and bake until golden, about 1 hour. Cool slightly, then turn out onto a wire rack to cool completely.

CALZONE

MAKES 4

THIS CRISPY PIZZA turnover (its name means "trouser leg," for its shape) is a specialty of Naples—san marzano tomato territory.

FOR THE DOUGH:

- 1 7-gram packet active dry yeast
- 1 1/2 cups all-purpose flour
- 1 1/2 cups cake flour
- 1 tsp. salt
- Extra-virgin olive oil
- 1/2 cup cornmeal

FOR THE FILLING:

- 1/2 lb. fresh mozzarella, sliced into 8 pieces
- 16 oil-packed anchovy filets
- 1 14-oz. can peeled whole san marzano tomatoes, drained and chopped
- 2 tsp. fresh oregano leaves

1. FOR THE DOUGH: Dissolve yeast in 1/4 cup lukewarm water in a large bowl and set aside until foamy, about 10 minutes. Combine flours and salt in a bowl. Add 1 cup flour mixture to yeast. Stir with a wooden spoon. Add 1/2 cup water, then 1 cup flour mixture. Mix well, then work in remaining 1 cup flour mixture. Gradually add another 1/4 cup water to make a soft, moist dough.

METHOD

Grilled Bread with Olive Oil and Garlic

(*Bruschetta*)

Serves 2

It is amazing what a little olive oil and garlic can do to a simple loaf of bread!

Grill 2 thick slices of country-style Italian bread over medium-hot coals (or under a broiler) until browned and slightly charred in places. Remove bread slices from grill, lightly rub each side with just enough of 1 peeled garlic clove to perfume the bread, then brush each slice with some extra-virgin olive oil. Sprinkle with a little salt and freshly ground black pepper, if you like.

2. Turn out dough onto a lightly floured surface and knead until smooth, 10–12 minutes. Divide dough into 4 balls. Lightly coat the inside of four small bowls with olive oil. Place 1 ball of dough in each bowl. Cover with damp cloths and set aside to rise until dough doubles in bulk, 2 1/2–3 hours.

3. FOR THE FILLING: Place pizza stone in oven and preheat oven to 450°. On a floured work surface, stretch 1 ball of dough into a thin 9" circle. Place 2 slices mozzarella, 4 anchovy filets, and 2–3 tbsp. tomatoes on one side of 1 circle of dough. Sprinkle with oregano, fold dough over, and pinch to seal. Repeat process to make a total of 4 calzoni.

4. Sprinkle cornmeal on pizza stone, place calzoni on top, and brush with a little oil. Bake until golden, about 15 minutes.

ROSEMARY FOCACCIA

SERVES 8

THIS POPULAR ITALIAN flatbread can be topped with everything from herbs to meat and cheeses. Marcella Hazan, the godmother of Italian cooking in America and a rosemary devotee, makes a focaccia similar to this one.

- 1 7-gram packet active dry yeast
- 5 tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil
- 4 cups flour
- 1 tbsp. salt
- 8 branches rosemary
- Cornmeal
- 2 lemons, washed and thinly sliced into rounds
- Coarse sea salt

1. Dissolve yeast in 1/2 cup warm water in a small bowl and let stand 10 minutes, then add 2 tbsp. of the oil. Combine flour and salt in a large bowl. Strip and chop leaves from 5 of the rosemary branches and stir into flour. Add yeast mixture and 1 1/4 cups water and stir until dough becomes too stiff to stir. Turn out dough onto a floured surface and knead





until smooth. Shape dough into a ball, transfer to a large oiled bowl, and cover with a damp cloth. Allow dough to rise in a warm spot for 2 hours.

2. Transfer dough to a floured surface. Using your fingertips, press dough out to form a 12" circle, then transfer to a baker's peel or inverted baking sheet dusted with cornmeal. Cover with a damp cloth and set aside for 1 hour.

3. Put a pizza stone in the oven and preheat oven to 400°. Whisk together remaining 3 tbsp. oil and 1 tbsp. water in a small bowl. Remove cloth from dough and dimple dough with your fingertips, then brush with oil-and-water emulsion. Arrange lemon slices and small sprigs of rosemary from remaining 3 branches over dough and sprinkle with salt. Slide dough onto pizza stone and bake until golden, about 30 minutes.

OLD-FASHIONED GENOESE SWEET BREAD

(Antico Pandolce Genovese)

SERVES 8

ALTHOUGH LIGHT, airy adaptations of this sweet bread are in vogue nowadays, this recipe came from Pasticceria Villa di Profumo, a pastry shop on the famed via Garibaldi in Genoa, and produces a more traditional dense and crumbly version.

- 1/2 tsp. active dry yeast
- 1/2 cup warm milk
- 1/2 cup butter, softened, plus additional for greasing
- 3/4 cup sugar
- 1 tbsp. fennel seeds
- 1/2 tsp. ground coriander
- 1 egg, lightly beaten
- 2 tsp. vanilla extract
- 4 tsp. orange flower water
- 3 1/2 cups flour
- 1/2 cup dried currants
- 1/3 cup golden raisins
- 1/3 cup finely chopped candied orange rind
- 1/3 cup pine nuts

1. Dissolve yeast in milk in a small bowl. Set aside until foamy, about 10 minutes.

2. Meanwhile, beat butter in an electric mixer and gradually add sugar, beating until mixture is light and fluffy. Stir in fennel seeds and coriander, then add egg, vanilla, and orange flower water, and mix thoroughly. Add milk and dissolved yeast and mix. (Mixture may appear slightly curdled.)

3. Gradually add flour, mixing thoroughly. When dough is smooth, mix in currants, raisins, orange rind, and pine nuts (dough will be moist). Transfer dough to a large greased bowl. Cover with a clean dish towel and set aside in a warm place to rise for 3–4 hours. (Dough may only rise a little; this is a dense bread.)

4. Preheat oven to 375°. Wet hands (dough will be sticky) and transfer to a greased cookie sheet. Shape into a 6" round and bake until golden, 45 minutes to 1 hour. Cool completely. To serve, cut or break into small pieces and serve with sweet wine, if desired. (Store in an airtight container.)

EASTERTIDE TART

(Torta Pasqualina)

SERVES 8

THIS EPIC GENOESE TART, filled with swiss chard (or, in some versions, artichokes), was traditionally made with 33 layers of dough—one for each year of Christ's life.

- FOR THE PASTRY:
- 6 cups flour
 - 6 tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil
 - 2 tsp. salt

- FOR THE FILLING:
- Salt
 - 4 1/2 lbs. swiss chard, stems discarded
 - 1/2 cup extra-virgin olive oil
 - 1 cup freshly grated parmigiano-reggiano
 - 1/4 cup ricotta
 - 2 tbsp. finely chopped fresh oregano
 - 2 tbsp. heavy cream
 - Freshly ground black pepper
 - 5 eggs
 - 2 1/2 tbsp. butter

1. FOR THE PASTRY: Place flour in a large bowl, make a well in the center, and add oil, salt, and 2 cups water. Mix thoroughly with a wooden spoon. When dough becomes too stiff to stir, knead on a floured work surface until smooth and soft, about 20 minutes (dough will be quite sticky). Divide into 6 equal balls, wrap in plastic wrap, and refrigerate for at least 2 hours.

2. FOR THE FILLING: Bring a large pot of salted water to a boil over high heat. Add swiss chard and cook until tender, about 3–4 minutes. Drain in a colander and refresh under cold running water. Squeeze out excess water and finely chop.

3. Heat half the oil in a large skillet over medium heat. Add swiss chard and cook, stirring, for 3 minutes. Transfer to a large bowl. Cool swiss chard slightly, and then add parmigiano-reggiano, ricotta, and oregano. Mix thoroughly, stir in cream. Season to taste with salt and pepper. Set aside.

4. Preheat oven to 400°. Lightly grease a 10" pie pan or 12" pizza pan. On a floured surface, roll out a ball of dough as thinly as possible (about 13 1/2" in diameter) and transfer to pan. Brush with a small amount of oil, then repeat with 2 additional balls of dough, layering them on top of the first one.

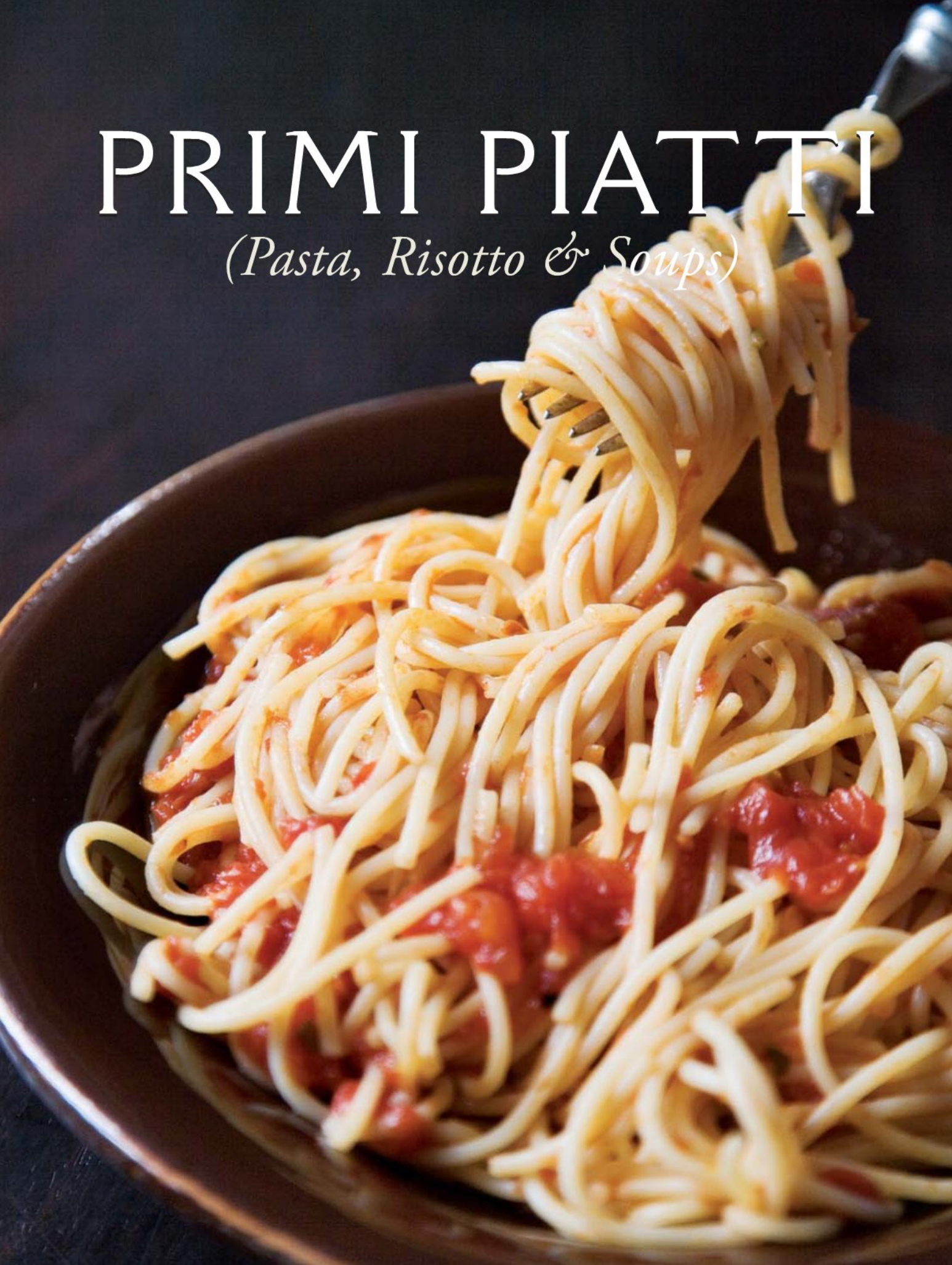
5. Spread swiss chard mixture on top of rolled dough, allowing a 2" border around outer edge. Using the back of a spoon, make 5 indentations in the swiss chard mixture. Break eggs into the indentations, then top each with 1/2 tbsp. butter. Season with salt and pepper.

6. Roll out remaining balls of dough as above, lay on top of filling, and brush each one with oil. Twist outer edge of dough together to seal. Bake torta until golden, about 45 minutes. Serve in wedges, warm or at room temperature.

VARIATION: Substitute 2 sheets (about 3 lbs.) thawed, frozen puff pastry for dough. Roll out 1 sheet, fill as in step 5, then roll out remaining sheet and place over filling and bake as in step 6.

PRIMI PIATTI

(Pasta, Risotto & Soups)



SPAGHETTI WITH TOMATO SAUCE

(*Spaghetti al Pomodoro*)

SERVES 4

TASTING PASTA throughout Italy has given us a new understanding of the term *al dente*; it doesn't just mean firm—it implies a real, if slight, resistance to the tooth. When Italians cook dried pasta, they like it to be almost underdone by American standards; the wheatiness of the pasta becomes an important part of the flavor experience.

3 tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil
2 cloves garlic, peeled and chopped
1 28-oz. can peeled whole san marzano tomatoes
Salt and freshly ground black pepper
3 fresh basil leaves, minced
1 lb. spaghetti
Freshly grated parmigiano-reggiano

1. Heat oil in an earthenware or enameled cast-iron pot over medium heat. Add garlic and sauté, stirring frequently, until golden, about 3 minutes. Add tomatoes, along with the juice from the can. Season to taste with salt and pepper.

2. Increase heat to high, bring sauce to a boil, and cook until liquid has reduced slightly, about 5 minutes. Reduce heat to medium-low and simmer, stirring occasionally, for about 30 minutes. Add basil leaves and cook for 15 minutes more.

3. Meanwhile, cook spaghetti in a large pot of boiling salted water until *al dente*, 10–12 minutes. Drain in a colander, add pasta to sauce, and stir well. Serve with parmigiano.

PASTA WITH MEATBALLS AND "GRAVY"

SERVES 12 – 14

NEW JERSEY restaurateur Andrew Abruzzese, creator of this recipe, insisted on using Tutto Rosso brand san marzano-style tomatoes for his sauce—which, like a true Italian-American, he called “gravy.”

FOR THE SAUCE:

3 tbsp. olive oil
4–6 cloves garlic, peeled and minced
2 35-oz. cans whole peeled plum tomatoes
1 28-oz. can crushed tomatoes
2 tbsp. tomato paste
1/2 bunch fresh basil, leaves chopped
Salt

FOR THE MEATBALLS:

1 1/2 cups fresh white bread crumbs
6 tbsp. milk
3/4 lb. ground round
3/4 lb. ground pork
3/4 lb. ground veal
3 tbsp. freshly grated pecorino romano
3 eggs
2 cloves garlic, peeled and minced
2 tbsp. chopped fresh parsley
Salt and freshly ground black pepper
3–4 tbsp. vegetable oil
2 lbs. penne rigate
Freshly grated parmigiano-reggiano

1. FOR THE SAUCE: Heat oil in a large heavy pot over medium-low heat. Add garlic and cook until golden, 2–3 minutes. Meanwhile, put 1 can at a time of whole tomatoes and their juice in the jar of an electric blender, pulse a few times until chunky, then add to pot along with crushed tomatoes and tomato paste. Use 6 cups of water to rinse jar of blender and tomato cans, then add to pot. Increase heat to medium and simmer, stirring often, for 1 hour.

2. FOR THE MEATBALLS: Toss bread crumbs and milk together in a medium bowl. Add ground round, pork, veal, pecorino romano, eggs, garlic, and parsley, and season to taste with salt and pepper. Mix lightly with your hands until well combined, then shape into 1 1/2" meatballs.

3. Heat oil in a large skillet over medium-high heat. Fry meatballs in batches until browned, about 5 minutes. Transfer to pot with sauce and simmer, stirring occasionally, until meatballs are cooked and sauce has thickened, 30–45 minutes. Add basil and season sauce to taste with salt.

4. Cook pasta in a large pot of boiling salted water over high heat, stirring often, until

just tender, 10–12 minutes. Drain pasta, transfer to a large bowl, and add as much sauce and as many meatballs as you like. Sprinkle with parmigiano-reggiano and garnish with parsley, if you like.



WHOLE WHEAT SPAGHETTI WITH ANCHOVY SAUCE

(*Bigoli in Salsa*)

SERVES 4

AT DA FIORE restaurant, we found some of the best food in Venice, from creations like a baby octopus and celery salad with vin santo vinegar to traditional dishes like this one. Contact your local specialty grocer for salt-packed anchovies and whole wheat spaghetti.

8 oz. salt-packed anchovies (about 32 fish)
1 1/2 cups tocai friulano or other dry Friuli white wine
1/2 cup extra-virgin olive oil
1 large yellow onion, peeled, halved, and thinly sliced
12 oz. whole wheat spaghetti
Salt

1. Soak anchovies in 1/2 cup of the wine and 2 cups water in a large bowl for 30 minutes. Gently pull anchovies apart into lengthwise halves from the head end and remove and discard spines and all tiny bones. Wash anchovies in the soaking liquid, discard the soaking liquid, set aside

6 halves for garnish, then cut remaining halves into small pieces and set aside.

2. Heat oil in a large skillet over medium heat. Stir in onions and anchovies, breaking up anchovies with the back of a wooden spoon, until onions are very soft and anchovies have “melted,” about 10 minutes. Add remaining cup of wine and stir, scraping up any brown bits stuck to bottom of skillet. Reduce heat to low, cover, and cook for about 30 minutes, stirring occasionally.

3. Meanwhile, cook spaghetti in a large pot of lightly salted (the anchovies are very salty) boiling water over high heat until pasta is just tender, about 8 minutes. Drain, add pasta to sauce, mix well, and serve garnished with reserved anchovies and parsley, if you like.

FARFALLE WITH WILD MUSHROOM AND TOMATO SAUCE

SERVES 4

THIS IS THE PERFECT dish for fans of wild mushrooms; the cooking variations are endless when they're in season.

- 4 tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil
- 1/2 lb. sweet Italian sausage
- 1/2 lb. wild mushrooms, trimmed and coarsely chopped
- 1 medium yellow onion, peeled and chopped
- 3 cloves garlic, peeled and minced
- 3 lbs. plum tomatoes, peeled, seeded, and chopped
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 2 tbsp. finely chopped fresh basil
- 2 tbsp. finely chopped fresh parsley
- 1 lb. farfalle pasta

1. Heat 2 tbsp. oil in a medium skillet over medium-high heat. Add sausage and cook, browning on all sides, for about 15 minutes. Remove sausage, cut into large pieces, and set aside. Add mushrooms to skillet and sauté until golden, 1–2 minutes. Remove

mushrooms from pan and set aside with sausage.

2. Reduce heat to medium-low, add remaining 2 tbsp. oil and onions, and cook, stirring occasionally, until onions are soft, about 20 minutes. Add garlic and cook for 2 minutes more.

3. Increase heat to medium, add tomatoes, season with salt and pepper, and cook, stirring occasionally, until tomato juices have evaporated, about 15 minutes.

4. Stir reserved sausage and mushrooms into sauce and cook for 10 minutes, then add basil and parsley and season with salt and pepper. Meanwhile, cook farfalle in a large pot of boiling salted water until al dente, about 10 minutes, then drain, toss with sauce, and serve.



BAKED SPINACH LASAGNE

(*Lasagne Verdi al Forno*)

SERVES 8 – 12

LASAGNE IS THE most famous and savory of all Italian baked dishes. Today it is made all over Italy, but the rich, complex version typical of the region of Emilia-Romagna—and especially of Bologna—has become emblematic of the dish.

2 tbsp. butter
Salt

4 6" x 22" sheets Spinach Pasta
(see recipe, page 93)

5 cups Bolognese Meat Sauce (see recipe, page 88)

1 cup freshly grated parmigiano-reggiano

2 cups Italian-Style Béchamel Sauce (see recipe, page 91)

1. Set oven rack in top third of oven, then preheat oven to 450°. Grease a 9" x 12" baking dish with butter and set aside. Bring a large pot of water to a boil over high heat and add 2 generous pinches of salt. Cook 1 sheet of pasta at a time until it floats to the surface, about 10 seconds. Carefully remove with a slotted spoon and plunge into a large bowl of salted ice water to stop further cooking. Remove from water when cool. Lay sheets out, being careful not to let them touch, on clean, damp kitchen towels; cover with more damp towels.

2. Line bottom of prepared baking dish with a layer of pasta, trimming sheets with a knife so that they fit in 1 even layer (patch if necessary). Spread evenly with about 1 cup of the meat sauce, then sprinkle lightly with some of the parmigiano. Add another layer of pasta, evenly spread 1 cup of the béchamel sauce on pasta, then sprinkle lightly with parmigiano. Repeat layers (you will have 3 layers of meat sauce and 2 of béchamel), ending with meat sauce and parmigiano. Reserve any extra meat sauce for another use.

3. Bake lasagne for 10 minutes. Increase oven temperature to 500° and cook until lasagne is bubbling around the edges and browned on top, 5–7 minutes more. Do not overcook. Allow lasagne to rest for 8–10 minutes before serving.

CANNELLONI

SERVES 4 – 6

CANNELLONI (literally, “big reeds”)—baked, stuffed tubes of fresh egg pasta—seems to have developed over time as a variation on the stuffed pasta dishes of



southern Italy, and can be filled with everything from seafood to veal to chicken livers. This recipe is a variation on cannelloni Rossini, which was named after the famous Italian composer, a noted gourmand.

FOR THE TOMATO SAUCE:

1 28-oz. can crushed tomatoes
1 medium yellow onion, peeled and halved
4 tbsp. butter
Salt and freshly ground black pepper

FOR THE FILLING:

2 tbsp. extra virgin olive oil
1 small yellow onion, peeled and minced

1 clove garlic, peeled and minced
1 chicken liver, chopped (optional)
6 oz. boneless, skinless chicken thigh, chopped
6 oz. ground veal
6 oz. ground pork
Salt and freshly ground black pepper
Pinch freshly ground nutmeg

FOR THE BALSAMELLA:

4 tbsp. butter, cut into pieces
1/4 cup flour
2 cups hot milk
Salt and freshly ground black pepper
1/4 cup grated parmigiano-reggiano

Salt
12 sheets fresh pasta, 4" x 5" each

2 tbsp. grated parmigiano-reggiano
2 tbsp. butter, cut into small pieces

1. FOR THE TOMATO SAUCE: Put tomatoes, onions, and butter in a medium saucepan over medium-low heat. Season to taste with salt and pepper and simmer, stirring often, until sauce thickens, about 30 minutes. Remove and discard onions.

2. FOR THE FILLING: Heat oil in a medium skillet over medium heat. Add onions and garlic and cook, stirring often with a wooden spoon, until onions are soft, about 5 minutes. Add chicken liver (if using) and mash to a paste with the back of the spoon. Add chicken, veal, pork, and salt and pepper to taste. Cook, stirring often, until meat is cooked through, about 10 minutes. Transfer meat to a cutting board and chop until texture is very fine and meat begins to hold together. Transfer meat to a medium bowl, stir in nutmeg, and set aside.

3. FOR THE BALSAMELLA: Melt butter in a heavy medium saucepan over medium-low heat. Add flour and whisk for 1 1/2 minutes (do not allow to brown). Gradually add milk, whisking constantly. Season to taste with salt and pepper and stir constantly until sauce is as thick as heavy cream, about 15 minutes, then add cheese. Add 1/2 cup of the sauce to the meat filling and set remaining sauce aside.

4. TO ASSEMBLE: Preheat oven to 375°. Add a generous pinch of salt to a large pot of boiling water over high heat. Cook pasta several sheets at a time until tender, about 30 seconds, then dip briefly in a large bowl of cold water. Lay sheets out, not touching, on clean, damp kitchen towels; cover with another damp towel.

5. Working with one sheet of pasta at a time, spread 2–3 tbsp. meat filling along wide edge, then roll up, jelly-roll style. Repeat with remaining pasta and filling.

6. Spread a thin layer, about 1 cup, tomato sauce over the bottom of a large



baking dish. Lay cannelloni, seam side down, in a single layer on top of tomato sauce. Spread another thin layer of tomato sauce over cannelloni. Spoon remaining balsamella over tomato sauce, sprinkle with cheese, and dot with butter. Bake until sauce is bubbling, 15–20 minutes, then brown under broiler for 3–4 minutes.

CALAMARI ON PASTA

SERVES 4 – 6

ITALIAN FISHERMEN'S fare is, by necessity, simple and fast to prepare. We got this hearty concoction from a San Francisco "old stove"—Lou "the Glue" Marcelli—who had learned it from his father.

- 1½ lbs. squid, cleaned
- 2 tbsp. olive oil
- 2 tbsp. butter
- 2 cloves garlic, chopped
- 1 28-oz. can tomato sauce
- 1 cup white wine
- ½ cup chopped parsley
- Salt
- 1 lb. linguini or spaghetti
- Freshly ground black pepper

1. Cut squid bodies into ½" "rings." If the tentacles are large, cut them in half vertically. Set aside.

2. Heat olive oil and butter together in a large sauté pan. Add garlic and cook over medium-high heat for about 5 minutes. Add tomato sauce, ¼ cup water, and wine. Cook sauce over high heat for 5 minutes, until it reduces and thickens.

3. Add all but 1 tbsp. of the parsley to the tomato sauce, lower heat, and simmer, uncovered, for about 15 minutes.

4. Meanwhile, bring a large pot of salted water to a boil, then add linguini or spaghetti and cook until tender (time will vary according to freshness of pasta, but it should take at least 7 minutes). Drain well, shaking colander gently to remove excess moisture.

5. Add calamari to tomato sauce, then remove pan from heat and allow to stand, covered, for 2 minutes. Add salt and pepper to taste. Add the drained pasta and toss well. To serve, garnish with remaining parsley.



LINGUINE WITH LOBSTER SAUCE

(*Linguine con Aragosta*)

SERVES 8

IN ITALY, THIS DISH is made with live crabs, but live lobsters are easier to find in the U.S. A note of caution: This preparation is not for the faint of heart or those who don't want to get messy!

- 2 1¼-1½-lb. live Maine lobsters
- ¼ cup extra-virgin olive oil
- ½ bunch parsley, finely chopped
- 2 cloves garlic, peeled and minced
- ¼ green bell pepper, cored, seeded, and minced
- ½ cups tomato purée
- ½ tsp. tomato paste
- 1 tbsp. chopped fresh basil
- 1 tsp. chopped fresh mint
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper
- Red pepper flakes
- ½ lb. dry linguine

1. Plunge a sharp knife into the top of each lobster's head just behind its eyes (this will kill it quickly), then set lobsters aside.

2. Heat oil in a large, deep skillet over medium heat. Add parsley, garlic, and peppers, and cook until fragrant, about 2 minutes. Stir in tomato purée, tomato paste, basil, and mint. Season to taste with salt, pepper, and red pepper flakes. Add lobsters, with belly sides down and tails flattened out, and reduce heat to medium-low. Cover and simmer, stirring sauce and turning lobsters occasionally, until lobster shells turn bright orange and meat is cooked through, about 45 minutes.

3. Remove lobsters from sauce and set aside to cool. When lobsters are cool enough to handle, crack shells with a mallet or the handle of a large knife, then remove all the meat from the shells, working over the tomato sauce to catch the lobster juices (this is a very messy job). Discard shells, cut lobster meat into bite-size chunks, and return to sauce.

4. Meanwhile, cook linguine in a large pot of boiling, salted water until just tender, 7–12 minutes. Drain pasta, then add to the lobster and sauce. Toss and continue to cook for 3–5 minutes before serving.

TAGLIOLINI WITH TRUE CLAMS

(*Tagliolini alle Vongole Veraci*)

SERVES 6 – 8

AT RIVIERA, A TRATTORIA facing the Giudecca Canal, this simple dish was made with true clams, or vongole veraci (*Tapes decussatus*). The Venetian lagoon is also full of Asian clams (*Tapes philippinarum*, manila clams), and these may be substituted.

- 6 tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 clove garlic, peeled and chopped
- ½ bunch parsley, trimmed and chopped
- 3½ lbs. manila clams, scrubbed
- ⅔ cup tocai friulano or other dry Friuli white wine
- 2 tbsp. good-quality Italian or California brandy
- Salt

1 lb. fresh tagliolini or linguine
1 tbsp. grated parmigiano-reggiano

1. Bring a large pot of water to a boil over high heat. Meanwhile, heat all but 1 tbsp. of the oil, the garlic, and half the parsley in a large skillet over medium-high heat for about 1 minute. Add clams, cover, and cook for 1 minute more. Add wine and brandy and cook, uncovered, until alcohol has evaporated, 2–3 minutes.

2. Cover and continue cooking, shaking skillet several times, until clam shells open, about 3 minutes more (discard any that don't open). Uncover and allow liquid to reduce slightly while cooking pasta.

3. Season boiling water generously with salt, add pasta, and cook until just tender, 1½–2 minutes (fresh pasta cooks much faster than dried). Drain.

4. Add pasta to skillet with clams, reduce heat to medium-low, and mix well. Add cheese and remaining 1 tbsp. oil, and season to taste with salt. Cook for 1 minute longer. Serve garnished with remaining parsley.



THE POOR WRETCH'S RIGATONI

(*Rigatoni alla Disgraziata*)

SERVES 4 – 8

THE NAME OF THIS classic Sicilian pasta may derive from the fact that bread crumbs were a substitute for grated cheese in poor households.

2 medium eggplants, trimmed and cut into 1" cubes
Salt

1 cup plus 2 tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil

1 cup bread crumbs

1 lb. dried rigatoni

2 cups tomato sauce

¼ tsp. dried red pepper flakes

¼ cup grated ricotta salata

Parmigiano-reggiano

1. Put eggplant into a colander, toss generously with salt, and set aside to drain for about 30 minutes. Rinse; then pat dry with paper towel.

2. Meanwhile, heat 2 tbsp. of the oil in a large, heavy skillet over medium-high heat. Add bread crumbs, and cook, stirring, until golden, 8–10 minutes. Transfer to a bowl, and set aside.

3. Wipe out skillet, add remaining 1 cup oil, and heat over medium-high heat. Add half the eggplant, and cook, stirring often, until deep golden, 8–10 minutes. Transfer eggplant with a slotted spoon to a large bowl, and season to taste with salt. Repeat with remaining eggplant.

4. Cook pasta in a large pot of boiling salted water over high heat until just tender, 12–15 minutes. Heat tomato sauce and red pepper flakes in a small pot over medium heat. Drain pasta, and add to bowl with eggplant. Add tomato sauce, ricotta salata, and bread crumbs, and toss well. Serve sprinkled with freshly grated parmigiano-reggiano.

SPAGHETTI WITH EGGS AND PANCETTA

(*Spaghetti alla Carbonara*)

SERVES 4

ROMANS CLAIM this pasta was introduced by the charcoal sellers who came down from Abruzzo in earlier times to hawk their wares—which is why they named it for the *carbonara*, the charcoal maker's wife.

1 tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil

5 oz. pancetta cut into ¼" x ¼" dice

2 eggs plus 2 egg yolks

1 lb. spaghetti

½ cup freshly grated parmigiano-reggiano

½ cup freshly grated pecorino romano

1. Heat oil in a skillet over medium-high heat. Add pancetta and fry until crisp and brown, 5–6 minutes. Set aside, saving rendered fat.

2. Put eggs, egg yolks, and ¼ cup water into a small bowl and beat together with a fork, then set aside.

3. Cook spaghetti in a large pot of boiling salted water until al dente, 10–12 minutes. Drain in a colander, then return spaghetti to the pot.

4. Use two large forks or spoons to mix the eggs, the pancetta with all its rendered fat and cooking oil, and ¼ cup each of the parmigiano and pecorino into spaghetti. Serve with the remaining ¼ cup each parmigiano and pecorino sprinkled on top.

GENOESE PASTA DISKS WITH BUTTER, PINE NUTS, AND MARJORAM

(*Corzetti alla Genovese*)

SERVES 6 – 8

CORZETTI ("LITTLE CROSSES") are a Genoese specialty of wafer-thin, hand-stamped, heavenly mouthfuls of pasta that resemble the communion host and date back to the time of the Crusades. You will need a corzetti mold, available from Corti Bros. (cortibros.biz; 800/509-3663). NOTE: This recipe requires overnight refrigeration.

2¼ cups flour

8 egg yolks

4 tbsp. white wine

Salt

½ lb. (2 sticks) butter

⅓ cup toasted pine nuts

1 tbsp. fresh marjoram leaves,
chopped

Freshly ground black pepper

4 tbsp. freshly grated parmigiano-reggiano



1. Sift flour into a mound on a clean surface and use your hand to make a well in the center. Add egg yolks, wine, and 1 tsp. salt and lightly beat together with a fork. Continue beating, gradually incorporating flour from inside edge of well. When dough becomes too stiff to work with the fork, knead with both hands to form a ball. Scrape any flour and dried bits of dough from work surface, then lightly flour work surface and continue kneading dough until smooth, about 5 minutes. Divide dough into 5 equal pieces, shape into balls, and flatten each into a rectangle. Cover with a damp kitchen towel and set aside for 30 minutes.

2. Feed the wide side of 1 of the pasta rectangles through the smooth cylinders of a hand-crank pasta machine set on the widest setting. Feed pasta through cylinders 3 or 4 more times, folding and turning pasta until it is smooth and the width of the machine. Decrease setting by 1 notch and feed narrow end of pasta through cylinders. Repeat, decreasing setting by 1 notch each time until you get to the second-to-last notch. (Don't roll pasta through last setting, or it will be too thin.) Repeat process with remaining 4 pasta rectangles. Flour work surface to keep pasta sheets from sticking; cover them with damp kitchen towels to keep them from drying out.

3. Uncover 1 sheet of pasta and use the concave base of a corzetti mold to press out 2" disks of pasta. Center a disk on carved base of corzetti mold, place top of mold on top of disk, and gently press down to imprint design onto pasta, lightly dusting disks with flour if they begin sticking to mold. Repeat process with the remaining 4 sheets of pasta. Spread stamped disks out on baking sheets lined with clean, dry dish towels, then refrigerate, uncovered, overnight to dry.

4. The following day, bring a large pot of salted water to a boil over high heat. Meanwhile, melt butter in a medium skillet over medium heat. Coarsely crush pine nuts and marjoram together with a mortar and pestle and add to butter in skillet. Season to taste with salt and

pepper and cook, stirring occasionally, until butter is golden, 1–2 minutes. Keep sauce warm over lowest heat.

5. Add pasta to boiling water and cook, stirring occasionally, until just tender, 1½–2 minutes. Reserve ¼ cup of the pasta cooking water, then drain pasta. Put sauce into a warm wide serving dish and cover with pasta. Sprinkle with parmigiano-reggiano and some of the reserved pasta cooking water, if you like.



"SILK HANDKERCHIEFS" WITH PESTO

(Mandilli de Sæ al Pesto Genovese)

SERVES 6 – 8

MANDILLI DE SÆ (Genoese for silk handkerchiefs) are delicate, handkerchief-size sheets of pasta, typically tossed with pesto. Traditionalists might object, but like many modern chefs, we make our pesto in a food processor.

FOR THE PASTA:

3½ cups flour
½ tsp. salt
5 eggs
2 tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil

FOR THE PESTO:

1 clove garlic, peeled and chopped
3 tbsp. pine nuts
Salt
2 cups packed fresh basil leaves,
preferably small and young
½ cup extra-virgin olive oil
¼ cup freshly grated pecorino sardo

¼ cup freshly grated parmigiano-reggiano

1. FOR THE PASTA: Sift flour and salt together onto a large work surface. Make a well in the center of the flour, add eggs, one at a time, working into flour with your hands. Continue kneading until dough is smooth and elastic, about 10 minutes.

2. Divide dough into 4 balls. Roll each out as thinly as possible—either on a lightly floured work surface using a rolling pin or with a pasta machine. Cut each sheet into 12–14 4" squares. Set squares aside, layered between clean dish towels.

3. FOR THE PASTA: Bring a large pot of salted water to a boil over high heat. Meanwhile, pulse garlic and pine nuts with salt in a food processor until finely ground. Add basil and pulse while slowly drizzling in oil. Add pecorino sardo and parmigiano-reggiano and purée, frequently scraping sides with a spatula, until pesto is smooth and creamy. Set aside.

4. To the boiling water, add 1 tbsp. oil and half the pasta, and cook until pasta is tender, 3–4 minutes. Remove carefully with a slotted spoon, drain in a colander, and toss with half the remaining oil. Repeat with remaining pasta. Dilute pesto with ½ cup of pasta cooking water and purée until creamy, about 1 minute. Gently toss hot pasta with pesto and serve immediately.

VARIATION: *Instead of a food processor, traditionalists may use a mortar and pestle to crush garlic with pine nuts. When smooth, add basil a bit at a time. Grind into a coarse paste, add a little salt, and stir in cheese. Drizzle in oil and continue to grind until smooth. Continue as in step 4.*

ORECCHIETTE WITH BROCCOLI RABE

SERVES 6

THIS IS THE KIND of dish regularly found on the menu at Rao's, one of New

York's last legendary Italian neighborhood joints.

2 lbs. broccoli rabe, stems removed
1 lb. orecchiette pasta
¾ cup extra-virgin olive oil
7 cloves garlic, peeled and minced
Salt and freshly ground black pepper
Freshly grated pecorino romano

1. Place broccoli rabe in a deep saucepan and cover with cold salted water. Bring to a simmer over high heat. When bubbles appear, remove from heat. Drain; plunge broccoli rabe into ice water, drain again, pat dry, and set aside.

2. Cook orecchiette in a large pot of boiling salted water until tender but firm, 7–12 minutes.

3. Meanwhile, heat oil in a large sauté pan over medium heat and sauté garlic until

fragrant and just golden, about 3 minutes. Add broccoli rabe, season to taste with salt and pepper, and cook until warmed through, about 5 minutes. Reduce heat to low and keep warm until pasta is ready.

4. Drain pasta, add to broccoli rabe, and toss to mix well. Remove from heat, transfer to a platter, and serve with grated pecorino romano.

ZITI WITH SAUSAGE AND FENNEL

(Ziti chi Sosizza e Finucchieddi)

SERVES 4

THIS IS OUR VERSION of a pasta we enjoyed at Orto dei Cappuccini in Polizzi, Sicily, which was created by owner Santo Lipani. Though not typically Sicilian, the dish combines many ingredients easily

found on the island (and in America) into a simple and refined whole.

¾ lb. mild Italian sausage
2 cloves garlic, peeled and finely chopped
¼ cup Pernod
¾ lb. wild fennel (or tender inner sections of cultivated fennel), coarsely chopped
½ cup strong beef stock
Salt
Crushed red pepper
Freshly ground black pepper
½ lb. ziti tagliate or other long, tubular pasta
¼ cup heavy cream

1. Remove casings from sausages and discard. Coarsely chop sausage meat, place in a large skillet over medium heat and brown, stirring frequently, for about 10 minutes. Add garlic and cook for 1 minute. Stir in Pernod, fennel, and beef stock, and cook until fennel is tender, about 10 minutes. Season to taste with salt, red pepper, and black pepper.

2. Meanwhile, cook pasta in a large pot of boiling salted water until al dente, 8–10 minutes, then drain. Stir pasta and cream into sauce, adjust seasoning and serve.

VARIATION: Use ½ lb. sliced cremini mushrooms in place of fennel, and ¼ cup cognac instead of Pernod. Brown sausage as in step 1, above, then remove from pan. Add mushrooms and cook, stirring, for 5 minutes. Return sausage to pan and add cognac and stock. Season with salt and black pepper and cook as above.

RADICCHIO WITH PAPPARDELLE

SERVES 4

RADICCHIO is sophisticated, versatile, and definitively Italian. It was originally developed in the Veneto region of northern Italy in the late 1860s, but today it is mostly grown in California fields.

3 tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil





1/4 lb. pancetta or slab bacon,
julienned
1 medium yellow onion, peeled and
chopped
Salt and freshly ground black pepper
1 lb. pappardelle
2 heads chiodia or treviso radicchio,
cored and julienned
Freshly grated parmigiano-reggiano

1. Heat extra-virgin olive oil in a large skillet over medium heat. Add pancetta and brown, stirring occasionally, for 5–10 minutes. Reduce heat to medium-low and add onions. Season with salt and pepper and cook, stirring occasionally, until onions are golden, about 30 minutes.
2. Meanwhile, cook pappardelle in a large pot of salted water until al dente, about 8 minutes. Drain pasta, reserving 1/2 cup cooking water.
3. Add radicchio to onions and pancetta and cook, stirring, until radicchio is wilted, about 3 minutes. Add pasta and reserved cooking water, mix well, season with salt and pepper, and serve topped with freshly grated parmigiano-reggiano.

AMARONE RISOTTO

(*Risotto all'Amarone*)

SERVES 4

ALTHOUGH CARNAROLI and the better-known arborio rice are often used to make risotto, this recipe uses a variety called vialone nano. Introduced to the Verona area in 1945, it is now grown in 90 percent of the region's rice paddies.

3/4 cup amarone
5 cups beef stock
4 tbsp. beef marrow (from 2–3
marrowbones)
4 tbsp. butter
1 medium yellow onion, peeled and
chopped
1 1/2 cups vialone nano (buonitalia.
com; 212/633-9090) or other
Italian risotto rice
3 oz. grana padano or parmigiano-
reggiano, grated

Salt
Leaves from 3 sprigs parsley, finely
chopped

1. Bring wine and stock to a simmer in separate pots, then keep both warm over low heat.
2. Put marrow, 2 tbsp. of the butter, and onions into a heavy medium pot over medium heat and cook, stirring frequently with a wooden spoon, until onions are soft, 8–10 minutes.
3. Add rice and cook, stirring to coat with the butter and fat, for 2 minutes. Add wine and cook, stirring constantly, until wine is almost completely absorbed, about 30 seconds.
4. Add a ladleful of stock at a time, stirring constantly; wait until almost all of the stock has been absorbed before adding more. Continue cooking and adding stock (you may have some stock left over) until rice is tender but firm to the bite, about 25 minutes.
5. Remove pot from heat and vigorously stir in remaining butter, then cheese. Season to taste with salt. Divide evenly among four plates and garnish with parsley.



RISOTTO WITH GREEN BEANS AND YELLOW BELL PEPPER

(*Risotto coi Fagiolini Verdi e il Peperone Giallo*)

SERVES 4 – 6

LEGENDARY COOKING teacher Marcella Hazan taught us an important tip on risotto: Each carnaroli grain has two starches that react

differently to heat and moisture. One expands, while the other dissolves, which is why you have to keep stirring risotto. This delicious recipe is from her book *Marcella Cucina* (HarperCollins, 1997).

1/2 lb. green beans, trimmed
Salt
1 beef bouillon cube
3 tbsp. butter
1 tbsp. vegetable oil
1 small yellow onion, peeled and
finely chopped
1 yellow bell pepper, cored, seeded,
and diced into 1/2" pieces
1 2/3 cups carnaroli or other Italian
risotto rice
2/3 cup freshly grated parmigiano-
reggiano
Freshly ground black pepper

1. Cook beans in a medium pot of boiling salted water for 2 minutes, then drain. Cut cooled beans into 1/2" pieces, then set aside.
2. Meanwhile, bring 6 cups of water to a boil in a medium pot over high heat. Reduce heat to low, add bouillon cube, and stir until dissolved. Keep broth warm over low heat.
3. Heat 1 1/2 tbsp. of the butter, the oil, and the onions in a medium-size heavy pot over medium-high heat. Cook, stirring often with a wooden spoon, until onions are pale gold, about 7 minutes. Add peppers, increase heat to high, and cook for about 1/2 minute, stirring constantly. Add reserved green beans and cook, stirring often, for 3–4 minutes.
4. Add rice to the beans and peppers, stirring to coat with the oil and butter and to combine it with the vegetables. Add 3/4 cup of the simmering broth at a time, stirring the rice constantly; wait until almost all of the broth has been absorbed before adding more. Continue cooking and adding broth (you may have some broth left over) until rice is tender but firm to the bite, about 15 minutes.
5. Remove pot from heat and vigorously stir in remaining 1 1/2 tbsp. butter and the

parmigiano-reggiano, then season liberally with salt and pepper. Transfer to a warm platter and serve at once.

RISOTTO WITH SHRIMP

(Risotto con Gamberetti)

SERVES 4

IN 1996, ACTOR Stanley Tucci wrote, codirected, and costarred in a movie called *Big Night*, about two Italian brothers struggling to keep their restaurant alive in a sleepy New Jersey shore town. Tucci's inspiration came from his mother's Italian specialties—dishes like this one.

- 3 tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 lb. medium shrimp, peeled, deveined, and halved lengthwise
- 1 small yellow onion, peeled and finely chopped
- 1 clove garlic, peeled and minced
- 1 cup arborio rice
- 1/2 cup dry white wine
- 1 tomato, peeled, seeded, and diced
- 3 cups fish or chicken stock, hot
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 1/4 cup freshly grated parmigiano-reggiano (optional)

1. Heat 2 tbsp. of the oil in a medium saucepan over medium-high heat. Add shrimp and cook, stirring, until shrimp are almost done, about 1 minute. Remove shrimp with a slotted spoon and set aside.

2. Add remaining oil and reduce heat to medium-low. Add onions and garlic and cook, stirring occasionally, until onions begin to soften, about 10 minutes.

3. Add rice, stirring to coat with oil. Add wine and tomatoes and cook, stirring, until rice absorbs all liquid, 2–3 minutes. Add hot stock 1 cup at a time. Continue cooking, stirring constantly and allowing rice to absorb all liquid before adding additional stock.

4. Add shrimp and cook, stirring, until rice is tender and risotto is creamy but not

wet, about 5 minutes more. Season with salt and pepper. If desired, stir in parmigiano-reggiano.



SPINACH AND RICOTTA DUMPLINGS

(Ravioli Nudi)

SERVES 4

VERY SIMILAR TO spinach gnocchi, these dumplings, which originated in Florence, are called “naked” because they wear no shell of dough.

- 2 lbs. fresh spinach (to yield 1 lb. trimmed)
- 1/2 lb. ricotta, drained
- 4 extra-large egg yolks
- 1 1/2 cups freshly grated parmigiano-reggiano
- 1/2 tsp. grated lemon zest
- Cayenne pepper (optional)
- Freshly grated nutmeg
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 1 tbsp. flour
- 1/4 cup butter, melted

1. Trim spinach and wash in several changes of water. Cook in a large pot of boiling salted water over medium-high heat for 10 minutes; drain in a colander and cool under cold running water. Place spinach in a clean tea towel; squeeze until completely dry (ravioli will fall apart during cooking if there is moisture on leaves). Finely chop.

2. Combine ricotta, egg yolks, 1 cup of the parmigiano-reggiano, and lemon zest in a large mixing bowl. Stir in spinach and season

to taste with cayenne (if using), nutmeg, and salt and pepper. Add flour and stir just until combined.

3. Bring a large pot of salted water to a simmer over medium heat. Wet hands (mixture will be sticky) and shape 1 tbsp. of mixture into a 1" ball. Drop ball into simmering water and cook until it floats to the top. If ball holds its shape, continue rolling remaining mixture. If ball falls apart, add another 1–2 tsp. flour to mixture. Test again.

4. Cook ravioli in batches. As they float to the top, transfer to a serving dish and cover with aluminum foil to keep warm. Drizzle ravioli with butter and top with remaining parmigiano-reggiano. Serve immediately.

RISOTTO WITH BUTTERNUT SQUASH, LEEKS, AND CLAMS

(Risotto di Zucca, Porri, e Vongole)

SERVES 4

THE SECRET OF good Italian home cooking resides within the ingredients themselves. No one knows this better than the godmother of Italian cooking in America—Marcella Hazan. She too has many secrets and shared this one with us: “Do not serve any risotto mounded up in the center of the plate. Spread it thin and evenly over the whole plate.”

- 1/2 lb. butternut squash, peeled, seeds and strings removed, and squash cut into dice no larger than 1/2"
- 18 live littleneck clams, scrubbed
- 1/4 cup extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 large or 2 medium leeks, trimmed, washed, halved lengthwise, then cut crosswise into very thin slices
- 2 tbsp. scallions, white part only, cut into very thin rounds
- Fine sea salt
- 1 tbsp. chopped fresh marjoram, or 1/2 tbsp. dried marjoram
- 1 cup Italian risotto rice, such as carnaroli, vialone nano, baldo, or arborio



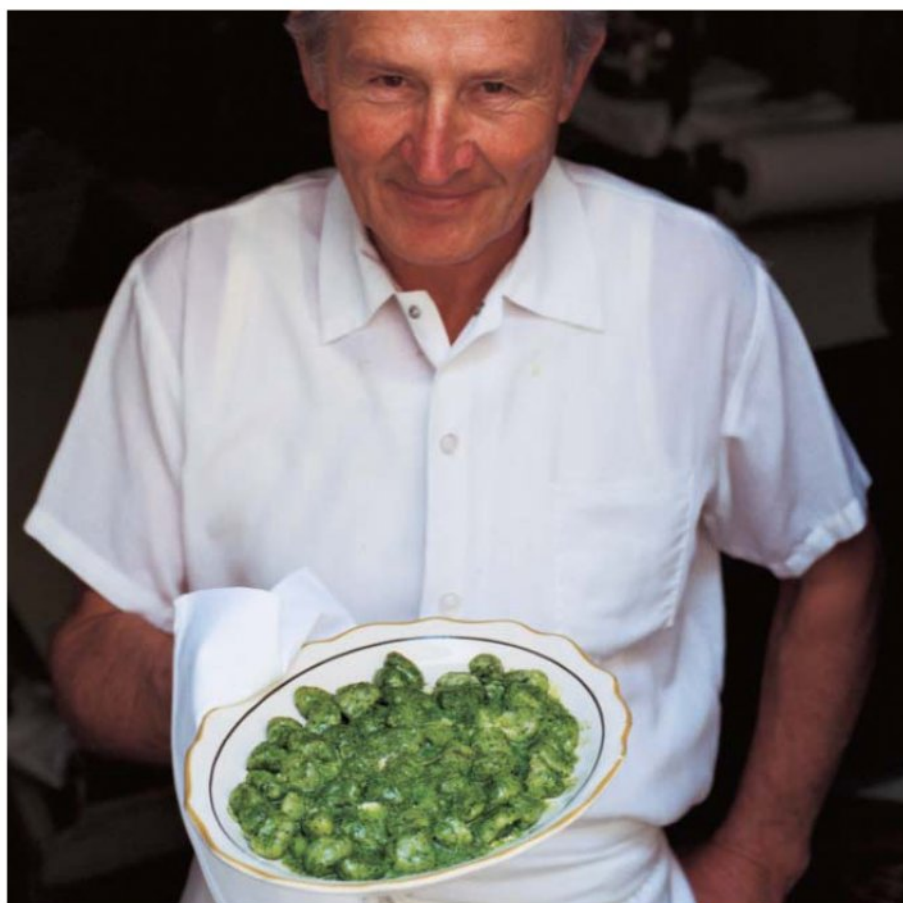
1 cup dry white wine
1 tbsp. whole green peppercorns
1/2 cup grated pecorino cheese

1. Turn oven on to 350°. Lay the diced squash in a baking dish that can contain it all without overlapping. Pour in 1/2 cup water and put dish in the oven. Cook for 20 minutes. When cool, drain, then set aside.

2. Pour 1/3 cup water into a 12" sauté pan, put in clams, cover, and turn on heat to high. Look in on clams after 1 minute, stirring them around. As soon as they unclench their shells, transfer them to a bowl. Keep heat going under pan, moving quickly to retrieve any clam that has opened up. (Discard any that don't open.) Line a strainer with a paper towel and set it over a small bowl. Pour pan juices and any juice in bowl of clams through the strainer. Detach clam meat from shells and put it in bowl with the filtered juice. Steep clam meat for 15–20 minutes, then retrieve it with a slotted spoon and cut each clam in half. Reserve clam juice and cut-up clams separately.

3. Pour 2 quarts of water into a saucepan and bring it to a steady simmer. Pour oil into a heavy 4–6-quart saucepan, add leeks and scallions, and turn on heat to medium-high. Cook, stirring from time to time, until leeks and scallions are very pale gold. Add half the squash together with some salt and cook for 2 or 3 minutes, turning it from time to time. Add marjoram and stir all the ingredients together. Add rice, turning it to coat well. Add half the wine, steadily stir the rice, and when all the wine has bubbled away, add the remaining half. Continue stirring to keep rice moving away from bottom and sides of pan.

4. Pour clam juices into the risotto. Continue to stir until all the liquid has evaporated, then add a ladleful or two of the simmering water. Stir constantly, adding simmering water by the ladleful whenever the rice begins to dry out, threatening to stick to the pan. In about 15 minutes, when the rice is still hard and chalky to the bite, stir in the remaining



squash. Continue to cook, stirring steadily and replenishing the water when necessary, until rice has lost its chalky consistency and is tender, but still firm, to the bite. Do not let rice dry out completely when you near the end, keeping its final consistency loose and flowing.

5. Add the reserved cut-up clams, stirring them quickly into the risotto. Add green peppercorns and pecorino. Remove pan from heat and stir vigorously. Taste and correct for seasoning. Serve at once.



GNOCCHI WITH PESTO

SERVES 4

FROM SAN FRANCISCO'S Italian quarter, North Beach, comes this interpretation of the well-known Ligurian dish. This recipe calls for the use of baked potatoes, which gives a much lighter dough for the gnocchi, and the addition of cream to the pesto, which helps mellow the bitterness of the herbs.

4 baking potatoes
2/3 cup flour
Salt
2 tbsp. pine nuts
2 cloves garlic
2 cups packed basil leaves
1/2 cup olive oil
2 tbsp. parmesan
1/4 cup heavy cream

1. Preheat oven to 350°. Pierce potatoes with tines of a fork, then bake for 40 minutes or until tender. While potatoes are still hot, peel and mash them finely.

2. Combine mashed potatoes, flour, and 1 tsp. salt. Knead until thoroughly mixed and holding together. Roll small amounts into 1" × 6" "ropes." Cut the ropes into 1/2" pieces. Use a fork to make an indentation on top of each piece, then pinch between your fingers to plump them up.

3. To make pesto, pulse pine nuts and 1/2 tsp. salt together in a food processor until finely ground. Add garlic and basil

and, with the motor running, drizzle in olive oil.

4. Bring a large pot of salted water to a boil. Place gnocchi in the pot carefully, so that they don't stick together. Cook 2–3 minutes or until gnocchi begin rising to the top. Carefully remove cooked gnocchi from pot with slotted spoon and drain on a plate lined with several thicknesses of paper towel.

5. Meanwhile, warm the pesto over medium heat in a large skillet. Stir in parmesan and cream. Taste for salt. Add gnocchi, stir gently, and serve.

SQUASH GNOCCHI WITH MEAT SAUCE

(Gnocs di Côte Zale cu Ragù)

SERVES 4 – 6

IN THE ITALIAN REGION of Friuli, dining al frasca—outdoors at a small farmhouse or wine estate—is the rule. This delicious recipe is a sampling of the fare at a typical frasca.

FOR THE MEAT SAUCE:

- 1/2 lb. ground beef
- 1/2 lb. ground pork
- 2 tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 1 large onion, peeled and finely chopped
- 1 28-oz. can peeled whole plum tomatoes, chopped

FOR THE GNOCCHI:

- 1 small butternut squash, quartered lengthwise, seeds removed
- 2 eggs
- Salt
- 1 cup flour

1. FOR THE MEAT SAUCE: Brown beef and pork in 1 tbsp. of the oil in a medium skillet over medium heat, using the back of a wooden spoon to break up meat. Season to taste with salt and pepper.

2. Meanwhile, cook onions in remaining oil in another medium skillet over medium

heat until soft and golden, about 20 minutes, then stir in tomatoes and their juices. Reduce heat to low and simmer, uncovered, stirring occasionally, until sauce thickens. Drain fat from meat, then add meat to tomato sauce. Adjust seasoning and set aside.

2. FOR THE GNOCCHI: Preheat oven to 350°. Put squash in a baking pan, cover with foil, and bake until soft, about 1 hour. Remove from oven and, when cool enough to handle, scoop out flesh into a strainer, and press out as much liquid as you can. Transfer to a large bowl, add eggs, and mash together with a potato masher. Season to taste with salt, then work in flour to form a thick, soft dough.

3. Bring a large pot of salted water to a gentle boil over medium-high heat. Using two tablespoons (one to scoop, the other to push batter off spoon), drop spoonfuls of batter into water. (If gnocchi fall apart, skim pieces out of water, add a little flour to batter, and try again.) Cook until gnocchi have risen to surface and simmered for 1–2 minutes. Transfer with a slotted spoon to a warm platter. Continue until all batter has been used. Spoon warm sauce over gnocchi.

RICE AND PEAS

(Risi e Bisi)

SERVES 4

THIS TRADITIONAL dish is one of ten recipes that, for us, define the food of Venice. This recipe is from one of our favorite restaurants, Da Fiore. Check your local specialty market for carnaroli rice.

- 1 3/4 lbs. fresh peas in pods
- Salt
- 4 tbsp. butter
- 2 oz. pancetta, diced
- 1 small yellow onion, peeled and minced
- 2 tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 1/3 cups carnaroli rice
- Freshly ground black pepper
- 1/2 bunch parsley leaves, minced
- Freshly grated parmigiano-reggiano

1. Shell peas, reserving pods. Place pods in a medium pot with 8 cups lightly salted water. Bring to a boil over high heat, reduce

to medium-low, and simmer for 1 hour. Strain broth into a medium pot, pressing on pods. Discard pods. Keep broth warm over low heat.

2. Melt 2 tbsp. of the butter in a large heavy-bottomed pot over medium heat. Add pancetta and onions and cook, stirring with a wooden spoon, until onions are golden, about 10 minutes. Add peas and 1/2 cup warm broth. Cover and cook until peas are tender, 5–10 minutes.

3. Increase heat to high, uncover, and cook off any remaining liquid. Add oil. When oil is hot, add rice and stir to coat well. Add about 3/4 cup warm broth and cook, stirring constantly, until most of the broth has been absorbed. Add about 3/4 cup more broth. Continue cooking, stirring and adding broth as needed until rice is tender but firm to the bite, about 20 minutes.

4. Remove from heat and season to taste with salt and pepper. Stir in 1 more cup broth, remaining 2 tbsp. butter, parsley, and 1/4 cup parmigiano-reggiano. Cover and allow to rest for a few minutes. Serve with additional parmigiano-reggiano.

METHOD

Two-Grain Polenta

(Polenta ai Due Grani)

Serves 8

This hearty polenta is perfect with braised, roasted, or grilled meats.

Put 10 cups water and 2 tbsp. salt into a heavy medium pot and bring to a boil. Meanwhile, combine 2 cups coarse yellow polenta, 2/3 cup buckwheat flour, and 1/2 cup fine yellow polenta in a medium bowl. Gradually add grain mixture to the boiling water in a slow, steady stream, whisking constantly. Reduce heat to medium-low and cook, stirring often with a wooden spoon, until polenta is tender and mixture is very thick, about 50 minutes. Season to taste with salt. Transfer polenta to a large warm serving platter and serve immediately.



METHOD

Polenta

(*Polente*)

Serves 4 - 6

Though rice and pasta are appreciated in Friuli, polenta is the basic starch; Friulians are even sometimes called *polentoni*.

Put 1 tbsp. coarse salt into 7 cups water in a heavy medium pot. Stir in $1\frac{2}{3}$ cups coarse yellow cornmeal. (Adding cornmeal to cold water helps keep the polenta free of lumps.) Bring water to a boil over medium-high heat, then reduce heat to low and continue cooking, stirring constantly with a wooden spoon, until polenta pulls away from the sides of the pot, 30-40 minutes. Stir in 1 tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil and season to taste with salt and pepper. Polenta may be served immediately or cooled slightly, then poured into a shallow, lightly oiled baking dish and allowed to set. Once set, cut polenta into rectangular slices about 3" x 4". Warm slices briefly in the oven before serving, or grill them briefly on a medium-hot grill (just enough to leave grill marks).

FATHER SAL'S TENERUMI SOUP

SERVES 6 - 8

TENERUMI ARE the leaves of the cucuzza, a Sicilian zucchini that has the flavor of a summer squash and cucumber combined. The creator and namesake of this recipe feels there is no substitute for tenerumi—but we've made a good soup in the same spirit with dandelion greens and spinach.

- 4 cups tenerumi, dandelion greens, or spinach, trimmed, washed, and roughly chopped
- 2 tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 small yellow onion, peeled and chopped
- 3 medium cloves garlic, peeled and chopped
- 3 medium tomatoes, peeled, seeded, and chopped
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper
- $\frac{3}{4}$ lb. spaghetti, broken into pieces
- 1 large piece parmigiano-reggiano

1. Put tenerumi with water still clinging to the leaves into a medium nonreactive pot. Cover and cook over medium heat, stirring occasionally, until leaves have wilted, about 10 minutes. Transfer tenerumi to a bowl and set aside. Wipe pot dry with paper towels and return to medium-low heat.

2. Heat oil in the same pot, then add onions and cook, stirring often, until fragrant, about 1 minute. Add garlic and continue to cook and stir for about 30 seconds. Add reserved tenerumi, tomatoes, and 15 cups water and season to taste with salt and pepper.

3. Increase heat to medium-high, bring soup to a boil, and add spaghetti. Reduce heat to medium and simmer soup until pasta is tender, about 15 minutes. Adjust seasonings and serve with parmigiano-reggiano for grating at the table.

MINISTRONE

SERVES 6

THIS SOUP, A LONGTIME fixture on the prix fixe menu at Nick's Italian Café in

McMinnville, Oregon, is served tableside from a tureen and topped with a generous spoonful of fragrant, freshly made pesto. "The heat," Nick explained, "makes the aroma rise." After the bowls are filled, the vessel is left on the table so that guests can help themselves to more, if they like.

FOR THE SOUP:

- 3 carrots, peeled and trimmed
- 1 medium yellow onion, peeled and coarsely chopped
- 1 rib celery, coarsely chopped
- $\frac{1}{2}$ green bell pepper, cored, seeded, and coarsely chopped
- 6 cloves garlic, peeled and coarsely chopped
- Leaves of $\frac{1}{4}$ bunch parsley
- $\frac{1}{2}$ lb. lean salt pork
- 1 $14\frac{1}{2}$ -oz. can diced tomatoes
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup tomato paste
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup beef stock base
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup dried basil
- 1 tbsp. dried oregano
- Freshly ground black pepper
- $\frac{1}{2}$ lb. string beans, trimmed and cut into 1" pieces
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cups shelled fresh or frozen peas
- Salt

FOR THE PESTO:

- Leaves of $\frac{1}{2}$ bunch basil
- Leaves of $\frac{1}{2}$ bunch parsley
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup freshly grated parmigiano-reggiano
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup freshly grated pecorino romano
- 1 tsp. pine nuts
- 1 tsp. extra-virgin olive oil
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper

1. FOR THE SOUP: Coarsely chop 1 of the carrots and put into a food processor. Add onions, celery, peppers, and garlic, pulse until vegetables are finely chopped, then transfer to a large heavy-bottomed pot. Add parsley, salt pork, and 3 quarts water and bring to a boil over medium heat. Reduce heat to medium-low and simmer, covered, for 6 hours.

2. Using a slotted spoon, transfer salt pork to a food processor, then process until fat liquefies and meat turns into a paste, about 30 seconds. Pass salt pork through a sieve back into pot, using a rubber spatula



to press as much paste through the sieve as possible. Skim off and discard fat from broth. Add tomatoes, tomato paste, beef stock base, basil, and oregano to pot. Season to taste with 1 tsp. pepper and simmer over medium-low heat, covered, for 2 hours.

3. Add 4 cups water to pot, increase heat to medium-high, and bring to a boil. Meanwhile, thinly slice remaining carrots crosswise, then add to pot. Add beans and peas, reduce heat to medium, and simmer soup, partially covered, until carrots, beans, and peas are soft, about 30 minutes more. Season to taste with salt and pepper.

4. FOR THE PESTO: Put basil, parsley, parmigiano-reggiano, pecorino romano, pine nuts, and oil into a food processor and process until smooth. Season to taste with salt and pepper.

5. Put soup into a warm tureen, if you like, and spoon pesto into soup. Serve soup in warm bowls garnished with some freshly grated parmigiano-reggiano and pecorino romano, if you like.

ITALIAN "WEDDING" SOUP

SERVES 8

DESPITE ITS NAME, this soup has nothing to do with weddings. In Italian, it is called minestra maritata (married soup) for its harmonious mingling of ingredients, and somewhere along the line the name got mistranslated.

- 1 3½-4-lb. chicken
- 2 carrots, peeled and trimmed
- 2 ribs celery
- 2 cups canned whole peeled plum tomatoes
- Salt
- ½ cup acine de pepe (frog's-eye) or other tiny round pasta
- 1 bunch escarole, washed and coarsely chopped
- ½ lb. ground beef
- 1 egg yolk
- 2 tbsp. dry bread crumbs

- 1 tbsp. freshly grated parmigiano-reggiano
- 1 tbsp. freshly grated romano
- Leaves from 2 sprigs parsley, chopped
- 1 clove garlic, peeled and finely chopped
- ¼ tsp. dried oregano
- Freshly ground black pepper

1. Put chicken, carrots, celery, tomatoes, 14 cups water, and salt to taste into a large pot. Bring to a boil over high heat, skimming any foam that rises to the surface, then reduce heat to medium-low. Simmer until chicken is just cooked through, about 40 minutes.

2. Meanwhile, cook pasta in a small pot of boiling salted water until just tender, 5–7 minutes. Drain, rinse, and set aside.

3. Put escarole and 2 tbsp. water into a large skillet, cover, cook over medium heat until wilted, 4–5 minutes, and set aside.

4. Gently mix ground beef, egg yolk, bread crumbs, cheeses, parsley, garlic, oregano, ½ tsp. salt, and ¼ tsp. pepper together in a large bowl, form into ½" meatballs, and set aside.

5. Using a slotted spoon, transfer chicken to a large bowl and set aside to let cool. Strain broth through a cheesecloth-lined colander into a clean medium pot, discarding solids. Shred chicken meat and set aside, discarding skin and bones.

6. Bring broth to a boil over high heat. Add meatballs, reduce heat to medium, and simmer until cooked through, 10–15 minutes. Add shredded chicken, escarole, and pasta and season to taste with salt and pepper. Simmer for 15 minutes more.

CIOPPINO

SERVES 8

THIS STEW WAS developed by the Italian fishermen who immigrated to San Francisco and yearned for the fish soups they enjoyed in their homeland. We sampled this succulent version at San Francisco's legendary Tadich Grill; they served it to us with bibs.

- 1 cup extra-virgin olive oil
- 16 tbsp. butter
- 1 medium yellow onion, peeled and chopped
- 2 medium carrots, peeled, trimmed, and chopped
- 1 rib celery, chopped
- 1 green bell pepper, cored, seeded, and chopped
- 1 leek, white part only, trimmed, cleaned, and chopped
- ½ small bulb fennel, trimmed and chopped
- 2 28-oz. cans crushed Italian tomatoes
- 2 tbsp. tomato paste
- 4 bay leaves
- 1 tsp. dried oregano
- 1 tsp. dried thyme
- 1 tsp. dried basil
- 2 pinches cayenne
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 2 cloves garlic, peeled and finely chopped
- 1½ lbs. halibut filet, cut into large pieces
- 16 sea scallops
- 16 large shrimp, peeled and deveined
- ½ lb. raw bay shrimp, or smallest shrimp available, peeled
- 1–2 cups flour
- 12 oz. crabmeat, preferably dungeness, picked over
- 2 cups dry white wine
- 16 manila clams, scrubbed
- ½ bunch parsley, chopped

1. Heat ½ cup of the oil and 8 tbsp. of the butter in a large pot over medium heat. Add onions and cook, stirring often, for about 2 minutes. Add carrots, celery, peppers, leeks, and fennel and cook, stirring often, for about 5 minutes. Add crushed tomatoes, tomato paste, 4 cups water, bay leaves, oregano, thyme, basil, and cayenne and season to taste with salt and pepper. Bring to a boil, reduce heat to low, and simmer, stirring occasionally, for 2 hours.

2. Heat remaining ½ cup oil, 8 tbsp. butter, and garlic in a large heavy skillet over high heat until fragrant, 1–2 minutes. Working in 2 batches, dredge halibut,

scallops, and large and bay shrimp in flour, shaking off excess, and fry, turning seafood frequently, until golden, 1–2 minutes. Transfer seafood with a slotted spoon to pot with sauce, add crabmeat, cover, and simmer for 10–15 minutes.

3. Add wine to same skillet over high heat, scraping browned bits stuck to bottom of skillet. Add clams, cover, and cook until shells open, about 5 minutes. (Discard any clams that don't open.) Add clams and broth to pot; adjust seasonings. Ladle soup into large bowls, garnish with parsley, and serve with toasted sourdough bread, if you like.

TWICE-COOKED TUSCAN BREAD SOUP

(Ribollita)

SERVES 6, TWICE

THIS IS ONE OF TUSCANY'S most famous bean dishes. Freshly made, it is a hearty but brothy soup; when reheated the next day, it becomes a deeply flavorful, almost porridgy stew.

1 lb. dried zolfini or cannellini beans
 1/2 cup fruity extra-virgin olive oil
 2 medium yellow onions, peeled and chopped
 2 carrots, peeled and thickly sliced
 2 ribs celery, trimmed and thickly sliced
 2 all-purpose potatoes, peeled and thickly sliced
 1 large bunch swiss chard, trimmed and coarsely chopped
 1 bunch cavolo nero or kale, trimmed and coarsely chopped
 1/2 small savoy cabbage, cored and coarsely chopped
 1 cup chopped canned Italian plum tomatoes
 3 thick slices day-old country white bread
 Salt and freshly ground black pepper

1. Cook beans according to the Basic White Beans recipe (see page 69), reserving cooking liquid. Reserve 1 cup cooked beans; then purée remaining beans along

with 2 cups of the cooking liquid. Set beans, purée, and remaining cooking liquid aside in three separate containers.

2. Heat 1/4 cup of the oil in a large earthenware casserole over medium-low heat. Add onions, and cook until soft, about 20 minutes. Add carrots, celery, potatoes, swiss chard, cavolo nero, and cabbage, stirring until mixed. Add tomatoes, cover, and cook until greens wilt, about 20 minutes.

3. Add puréed beans and remaining cooking liquid, and simmer, covered, until vegetables

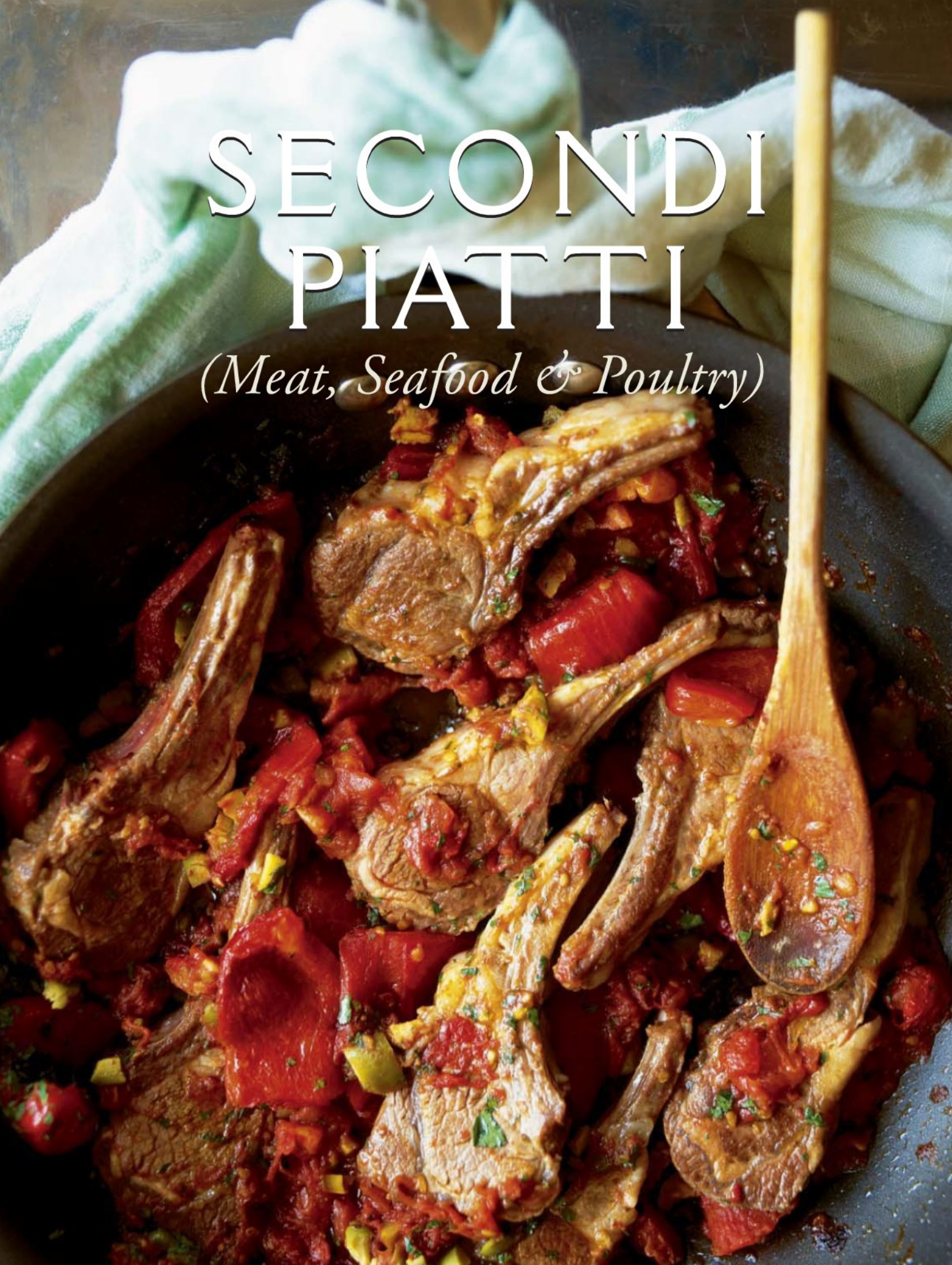
are soft, about 1 hour. Add bread and reserved beans, stir gently, cover, return to a simmer, and cook until bread begins to soften, about 10 minutes. Season to taste with salt and pepper, and serve. Refrigerate leftover soup.

4. The next day, preheat oven to 375°. Heat the leftover soup in the casserole in the oven, uncovered, stirring occasionally, until heated through, about 1 hour. For the last 30 minutes, do not stir; let soup brown lightly. Drizzle with remaining 1/4 cup oil, and serve.



SECONDI PIATTI

(Meat, Seafood & Poultry)



LAMB CHOPS CALABRIA-STYLE WITH TOMATOES, PEPPERS, AND OLIVES

(Costolette d'Agnello alla Calabrese)

SERVES 4

WELL-KNOWN COOKBOOK author Marcella Hazan says: "This is a recipe that starts out as two before becoming one. The chops and the sauce ... are cooked separately. Small rib chops should be cooked very briefly to a moist, flaming pink. Cook them too long, and they will turn gray and lose all their juice."

- 1 large red bell pepper or 2 small ones
- 8 rib lamb chops, each about 1" thick
- Fine sea salt
- 2 tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil
- 1/2 cup chopped onion
- 2 cups peeled, ripe, fresh plum tomatoes, cut up with their juice, or canned imported Italian san marzano tomatoes
- 3 tbsp. chopped Italian flat-leaf parsley
- 1/4 cup green olives in brine, pitted and coarsely cut up
- Freshly ground black pepper

1. Cut each pepper lengthwise along the creases, remove the stem, seeds, and pithy core, and skin with a swivel-blade vegetable peeler. Cut into approximately 1 1/2" squares.
2. Sprinkle the chops on both sides with a little salt.
3. Put the olive oil into a 12" skillet and turn on the heat to high. When hot, slide in the lamb chops. Brown them thoroughly on one side, turn them, and brown thoroughly on other side; transfer to a plate.
4. Put the onions into the pan and cook over lively heat, stirring frequently, until they become colored a rich gold. Add the tomatoes with their juice, turning them over in the pan once or twice, and cook

for 5 minutes. Add the peppers, parsley, olives, salt, and generous grindings of pepper. Turn the heat down to medium. Cook, stirring occasionally, for about 8 minutes, until the peppers are tender but firm.

5. Sprinkle the chops with pepper and put them into the pan with the sauce. Turn the chops over several times to coat them well, and after a minute or so empty the full contents of the skillet onto a warm serving platter and promptly bring to the table.

ROAST LOIN OF PORK

(Coscia 'i Maiali Arrustutu)

SERVES 6

ACTOR VINCENT SCHIAVELLI shared the secret to his Papa Andrea's succulent roast with us: The onion-and-peppercorn coating infuses the meat with loads of flavor.

- 1 tbsp. black peppercorns
- 1 small peeled yellow onion
- 3-lb. boneless loin of pork
- Salt
- 6 Idaho potatoes, peeled
- 3 tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 cup dry white wine

1. Preheat oven to 375°. Wrap black peppercorns in a clean dish towel, then crush by pressing with the bottom of a heavy skillet or tapping gently with a mallet. (Peppercorns should be cracked, not ground.)
2. Finely chop yellow onion. Generously salt pork loin. Place pork in a medium roasting pan fitted with a roasting rack. Top with cracked pepper and onions, patting them gently in place.
3. Cut potatoes into large pieces, toss with salt and olive oil, and add to roasting pan. Roast pork and potatoes for 45 minutes, then add wine. Stir potatoes and cook for an additional 45 minutes, basting occasionally.
4. Remove pan from oven, transfer pork to a cutting board, and allow to rest for 5 minutes before carving. To serve, transfer potatoes to a platter, arrange pork over potatoes, and top with any pan juices.

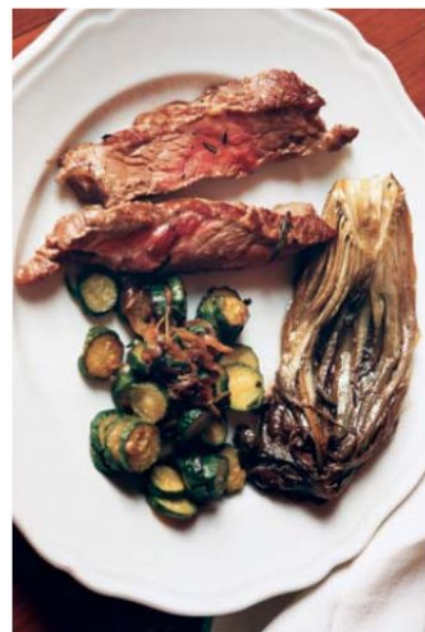
SEASONED, SLICED GRILLED BEEFSTEAK

(Tagliata di Manzo)

SERVES 4

WE DISCOVERED this scrumptious dish during a luncheon prepared for us in Venice by Marcella Hazan. Hot-searing coaxes flavor from beef, a method she also uses for fresh tuna.

- 1/3 cup extra-virgin olive oil
- 12 medium cloves garlic, peeled
- 2 sprigs fresh rosemary
- 2 boneless rib-eye or strip steaks, cut 2" thick
- Salt
- Freshly ground black pepper



1. Heat oil and garlic in a medium sauté pan over medium-high heat. Cook, stirring occasionally, until garlic is pale gold, about 7 minutes. Remove from heat and add rosemary sprigs, turning them over several times, then set pan aside.
2. Heat a large seasoned cast-iron skillet or stove-top grill over high heat. When the pan is very hot, add the steaks, which should sizzle instantly and quickly begin to smoke. Cook until very brown on one side, 2–3 minutes; then turn steaks over, sprinkle with salt, and cook for another 3 minutes (the steaks should be very rare).

3. Remove skillet from heat and transfer steaks to a cutting board. Slice them on an angle, across the grain, into $\frac{1}{2}$ "-thick slices.

4. Return pan with garlic and rosemary to stove and heat over medium-high heat. When oil begins to heat up, add the steak slices together with any juices on the cutting board. Cook about 1 minute, turning frequently and seasoning generously with pepper.



GRILLED SAUSAGE WITH WHITE BEANS

(Salsiccia Nostrana alla Griglia con Fagioli all'Uccelletto)

SERVES 4

THIS RECIPE CAME from Ristorante La Botte in the town of Stresa, a popular tourist destination on Lake Maggiore near Italy's border with Switzerland.

- 1 lb. dried cannellini beans
- 2 oz. pancetta, cubed
- 1 medium yellow onion, peeled and chopped
- 1 medium carrot, peeled, trimmed, and chopped
- 1 rib celery, chopped
- 1 pint cherry tomatoes
- 1 clove garlic, peeled and chopped
- Leaves of 1 sprig fresh rosemary, chopped
- 1 bay leaf
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 8 links (about 2 lbs.) fresh pork sausage without fennel

1. Put beans and 8 cups cold water into a medium pot and bring to a boil over medium-high heat. Turn off heat and let beans soak for 20–30 minutes.

2. Add pancetta, onions, carrots, celery, tomatoes, garlic, rosemary, and bay leaf to pot of beans and soaking water and bring to a simmer over medium-high heat. Reduce heat to medium-low and simmer until beans are tender, 2–2½ hours. Season to taste with salt and pepper. Discard bay leaf.

3. Preheat a charcoal grill. Grill sausages over medium-hot coals until lightly browned, 8–12 minutes. Using a sharp knife, split sausages lengthwise so that they open like a book, then grill for a few minutes more on each side.

4. Divide beans and some of the cooking liquid among four plates and put 2 sausages on top of each.



VEAL RIB CHOP MILANESE ALLA PICCATA

SERVES 6

THE TERM MILANESE refers to flattened meat, usually veal, coated in bread crumbs and fried. Piccata is flattened meat in a lemon–butter sauce. Together they create a savory and delectable dish.

- 6¾-lb. veal rib chops, rib bones frenched
- 1½ cups flour
- 3 cups dried bread crumbs
- 3 eggs
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper
- ¾ cup extra-virgin olive oil
- ¾ cup corn oil
- 8 tbsp. butter
- 2 shallots, peeled and finely chopped
- ⅓ cup chicken stock
- ¼ cup sweet sherry
- Juice of 2 lemons
- 1 lemon, scrubbed and thinly sliced
- 18 caper berries

1. Put 1 chop on a sheet of plastic wrap and loosely cover with another sheet. Using a meat pounder and working from the center with outward strokes, pound meat flat to a $\frac{1}{4}$ " thickness and set aside. Repeat process with the remaining chops.

2. Preheat oven to 200°. Put flour into a wide dish and bread crumbs into another. Lightly beat eggs in a third wide dish. Generously season chops with salt and pepper, then dredge in flour, then egg, then bread crumbs, lightly pressing bread crumbs into meat. Heat olive and corn oils together in a large deep skillet over medium-high heat. Working in batches, fry chops until golden on one side, about 3 minutes, turn chops, reduce heat to medium, and continue frying until chops are cooked through, 5–6 minutes more. Transfer to a platter and keep warm in oven.

3. Discard oil from skillet, then wipe clean with paper towels. Return skillet to stove, add butter, and melt over medium heat. Add shallots and cook until soft, about 5 minutes. Increase heat to high, then add stock, sherry, lemon juice, and lemon slices. Season to taste with salt and pepper and cook, stirring often, until sauce thickens and lemon slices are soft, about 5 minutes. Add caper berries and cook until warmed through, about 30 seconds.

4. Divide chops among six warm plates and spoon sauce, lemon slices, and caper berries over each.



PANFRIED BREADED BEEF CUTLET WITH TOMATO SAUCE, HAM, AND MOZZARELLA

(Milanesa a la Napolitana)

SERVES 4

THIS RECIPE EXEMPLIFIES the influence Italian immigrants had on Buenos Aires when they arrived in the early 1900s. Its foundation is the milanesa, or Milan-style breaded beef cutlet, which is so popular in Argentina that, along with the empanada, it is considered a national dish.



around the edges, 10–15 minutes. Transfer to four plates to serve.

STEWED OXTAIL

(Coda di Bue Vaccinara)

SERVES 4

THIS TRADITIONAL Roman specialty dates back to the time when customers paid the butcher with the entrails, hide, and tails of the animal. The butcher had to find a way to turn the fee into a delicacy, hence this dish.

- 4 tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil
- 2 oz. fat from prosciutto or fatty salt pork, finely chopped
- 1 small white onion, peeled and finely chopped
- 1 carrot, peeled, trimmed, and finely chopped
- 4 ribs celery; 1 finely chopped, 3 cut crosswise into thirds and blanched
- 2 lbs. meaty oxtail, cut into 2½"- to 3"-thick pieces
- 1¼ cups chianti or other dry Italian red wine
- 1 35-oz. can whole peeled plum tomatoes
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper

- 2 eggs
- Leaves of 12 sprigs fresh parsley, minced
- 2 cloves garlic, peeled and minced
- Salt
- 1 cup fine dry bread crumbs
- ½ cup corn oil
- 4 6-oz. ¼"-thick boneless trimmed beef sirloin cutlets
- 2 cups tomato sauce, hot
- 4 2-oz. slices boiled ham
- 8 oz. mozzarella, sliced into 4 pieces
- 1 roasted red bell pepper, stemmed, seeded, and thickly sliced (optional)

1. Preheat oven to 450°. Beat eggs, parsley, garlic, and salt to taste together in a wide shallow dish and set aside. Put bread crumbs into another wide shallow dish and set aside.

2. Heat oil in a large deep skillet over medium heat until hot but not smoking. Meanwhile, dip each cutlet in egg mixture, then dredge in bread crumbs. Working in batches, cook cutlets in the hot oil, gently shaking skillet over heat occasionally and turning cutlets once, until golden brown on each side, 3–4 minutes per side. Drain on paper towels.

3. Skim off ¼ cup of the thinner, top layer of the tomato sauce into a small bowl; set aside. Put each cutlet on an individual broiling pan or lay them on a baking sheet in a single layer. Spoon one-quarter of the remaining tomato sauce over each cutlet, cover sauce with a slice of ham, cover ham with a slice of mozzarella, top cheese with some roasted peppers (if using), then spoon reserved tomato sauce over peppers and cheese. Bake until cheese melts and bubbles

1. Put oil, prosciutto fat, onions, carrots, and chopped celery into a large heavy casserole, and sauté over medium-high heat, stirring frequently, until fat has rendered and vegetables are soft, about 5 minutes.

2. Add meat and cook until lightly browned, stirring vegetables often, about 5 minutes. Add wine and cook, scraping browned bits stuck to bottom of casserole with a wooden spoon, until wine has reduced by a quarter, 6–8 minutes.

3. Add tomatoes and their juices. Season to taste with salt and pepper, reduce heat to medium-low, cover, and simmer, stirring occasionally to break up tomatoes, for 2 hours. Add celery pieces, re-cover, and continue simmering until meat is very tender, about 1 hour longer.



VENISON OSSO BUCCO

SERVES 6

LEGENDARY CHEF and restaurateur Lidia Bastianich (of Felidia, Becco, and Frico Bar in New York City, and Lidia's in Kansas City) gave us this hearty recipe. See page 40 for a method for making polenta.

- 2 oranges
- 1 lemon
- 1/4 cup extra-virgin olive oil
- 2 medium yellow onions, peeled and chopped
- 1 medium carrot, peeled and shredded
- 1 celery stalk, chopped
- 2 bay leaves
- 4 cloves
- 1 sprig fresh rosemary
- 10 juniper berries
- Salt
- Freshly ground black pepper
- 6 8-10-oz. venison osso bucco, cut from the hind shanks
- 1/2 cup flour
- 1/4 cup vegetable oil
- 2 tsp. tomato paste
- 1 cup fruity red wine, such as chianti
- 1 cup fresh carrot juice
- 6 plum tomatoes, peeled and crushed
- 2 cups hot chicken stock

1. Peel zest from oranges and lemon in wide strips with a vegetable peeler. Set the zest of 1 orange and the lemon aside for sauce. Slice zest of other orange into narrow strips about 1/8" wide and set aside for garnish. Remove and discard pithy membrane of 1 orange, then slice into segments and reserve for garnish. Juice second orange and set juice aside.

2. Heat olive oil in a large heavy pot with cover over medium heat. Add onions and cook, stirring, until soft, about 5 minutes. Add carrots, celery, bay leaves, cloves, rosemary, and juniper berries, and season to taste with salt and pepper. Cook, stirring, until vegetables are light golden brown, about 15 minutes. Transfer to a bowl and set aside.

3. Meanwhile, generously season venison with salt. Dredge venison in flour until lightly coated, then shake off excess flour. Add vegetable oil to same pot and increase heat to medium-high. Add venison in a single layer and cook until well browned on all sides, about 10 minutes. Return vegetable mixture to pot, reduce heat to medium, stir in tomato paste, and cook until tomato paste begins to caramelize, about 6 minutes.

4. Add wine and bring to a boil, scraping up any brown bits stuck to bottom of pot. Add carrot juice, reserved orange juice, and reserved wide strips of orange and lemon zest. Bring to a vigorous boil and cook until sauce has reduced and vegetables have softened, about 8 minutes. Add tomatoes, reduce heat to medium-low, and simmer, uncovered, for 30 minutes. Stir in chicken stock, partially cover pot, and simmer for 1 1/2 hours, or until meat is fork-tender.

5. Remove meat from pot. Strain sauce through a sieve, pressing on vegetables to extract liquid; discard solids. Return meat to pot with sauce and keep warm until ready to serve. Garnish with reserved orange segments and zest, and serve with polenta, if you like.

SICILIAN RICE TIMBALE

(*Tumala d'Andrea*)

SERVES 4 - 6

THE RECIPE FOR this impressive dish is a lighter version of its predecessor, an ancient casserole of layered meats, cheese, egg, and rice. It's surprisingly easy to make.

- 2 cups arborio rice
- Salt
- 3 eggs
- 2 1/2 cups grated pecorino romano
- 1/2 lb. ziti or penne rigate
- 2 cups warm Sicilian Tomato-Meat Sauce (see recipe, page 87) or other tomato sauce
- 1/2 cup fresh shelled or frozen peas
- 1/2 cup bread crumbs
- Freshly ground black pepper

1. Cook rice in a large pot of boiling salted water until al dente, about 15 minutes.

Drain, refresh in cold water, then transfer to a large bowl. Allow rice to cool completely, then stir in 2 of the eggs and 1 cup of the pecorino romano. Cover with a dish towel and set aside in refrigerator for at least 6 hours.

2. Preheat oven to 400°. Cook pasta in a large pot of boiling salted water until not quite tender, about 8 minutes. Drain, transfer to a large bowl, and toss with 1 cup of the sauce. (It is important that sauce be thick or pasta mixture will be too watery and tumala will fall apart when unmolded.) Add peas and 1/2 cup of the pecorino romano, then mix gently with a wooden spoon and set aside to cool.

3. To assemble the tumala, coat a well-oiled 2-quart 8" ovenproof bowl with bread crumbs. Moisten hands so that rice and pasta won't stick to them. Completely line bowl with rice, forming an even rice wall about 1/2" thick. Gently pack pasta into bowl, then top with remaining rice, pressing it firmly in place. Lightly beat remaining egg, then brush over top of tumala.

4. Bake until tumala is golden, about 1 hour. Allow to cool for 10 minutes, then loosen sides with a knife. Turn out onto a large platter. (If necessary, tap bottom of bowl to loosen.) Slice into wedges at the table and serve topped with additional sauce, grated cheese, and pepper.

STUFFED VEAL BREAST

SERVES 8 - 10

THE INCLUSION of pancetta is proof of this recipe's Italian roots.

- 2 medium yellow onions, peeled and finely chopped
- 1 clove garlic, peeled and minced
- 2 tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 lb. pancetta, thinly sliced
- 7 cups fresh bread crumbs
- 1 tbsp. chopped fresh sage
- 1 tbsp. fresh thyme leaves
- 3 tbsp. chopped fresh parsley

- 1 tbsp. red wine vinegar
- 2 eggs, lightly beaten
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 6 carrots, peeled and sliced
- 4 leeks, washed and quartered
- 1 whole veal breast, 12–14 lbs., cut with pocket
- 2 cups white wine

1. Cook onions and garlic in oil in a skillet over medium-low heat for 15 minutes. Add one-quarter of the pancetta, chopped, and cook until brown, about 6 minutes.

2. Preheat oven to 325°. For stuffing, add bread crumbs, sage, thyme, parsley, vinegar, eggs, and 2 tbsp. water to onion mixture. Season with salt and pepper.

3. Place carrots and leeks in a large roasting pan. Season veal with salt and pepper, fill pocket with stuffing, and place meat in pan. Arrange remaining pancetta on top. Cook, uncovered, for 2½ hours, adding water if necessary. Transfer veal to a platter; discard carrots and leeks.

4. Skim fat from pan juices, deglaze with wine over medium heat, and reduce sauce by half.

METHOD

Roman Lamb Leg

Serves 6–8

If roasting a whole baby lamb seems daunting, just roast a leg.

Preheat oven to 400°. Trim fat from an 8-lb. leg of lamb and rub with olive oil. Cut incisions all over lamb with a knife and stuff with lots of sliced peeled garlic cloves and fresh rosemary. Season with salt and pepper. Place in an oiled pan, scatter more garlic on top, and drizzle with olive oil. Roast until lamb begins to brown, about 30 minutes. Reduce heat to 350°, add 2 cups white wine (and some sliced peeled small potatoes, if you like), and cook until the lamb is medium-rare, about 1 hour. Serve with pan juices.



BEEF BRAISED IN AMARONE

(*Brasato all'Amarone*)

SERVES 6–8

WHEN WE SAMPLED this dish—the house specialty—at Trattoria Dalla Rosa Alda in Italy's Valpolicella region, we noticed the restaurant kept a platter of polenta resting by the wood fire in the kitchen. As orders came in for dishes like this one, a piece of polenta was sliced off and grilled over the fire to be served on the side.

- 1 750-ml bottle young amarone
- 2 medium yellow onions, peeled and finely diced
- 2 carrots, peeled, trimmed, and finely diced
- 2 ribs celery, finely diced
- 1 medium bulb celery root, peeled, trimmed, and finely diced
- 3 cloves garlic, peeled and chopped
- 1 branch each fresh rosemary, thyme, and sage, and 2 bay leaves, tied together with kitchen twine
- Finely grated zest of 1 lemon
- 1 4-lb. boneless cross-rib pot roast
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 3 cups vegetable or meat stock
- ¾ cup extra-virgin olive oil

1. Set ¼ cup of the wine aside and pour remaining wine into a large heavy pot with a tight-fitting lid. Add onions, carrots, celery, celery root, garlic, bundle of herbs, and lemon zest. Generously season meat with salt and pepper and add to pot. Add stock and ¼ cup of the oil and bring to a simmer over

medium-high heat, skimming any foam that rises to the surface. Reduce heat to medium-low, cover, and braise meat, turning every hour, until very tender, about 4 hours.

2. Transfer meat to a cutting board, loosely cover with foil, and set aside. Remove and discard bundle of aromatics from pot. Strain braising broth into a bowl, setting broth and strained vegetable mixture aside separately.

3. Heat ¼ cup of the oil in a large skillet over medium-high heat. Add 3 cups of the vegetable mixture and ½ cup of the broth (save remaining vegetable mixture and broth for another use), mash mixture with a potato masher to a paste, and cook until liquid evaporates, 6–8 minutes. Add reserved wine and cook, stirring, until wine evaporates, 1–2 minutes. Add remaining oil and cook until sauce darkens and begins to fry, 5–6 minutes. Season sauce to taste with salt and pepper.

4. Slice meat and serve with sauce spooned on top. Garnish each serving with a slice of grilled polenta, a piece of boiled carrot, and a fresh bay leaf, if you like.

ROLLED STUFFED MEAT WITH TOMATO SAUCE

(*Braciola alla Marinara*)

SERVES 4

THIS DISH CAN BE made with either veal or beef. Veal is lower in fat and more tender, but beef is cheaper and has a heartier, meatier flavor. Save the leftover meat-enriched sauce for pasta.

FOR THE SAUCE:

- 2 14-oz. cans crushed tomatoes
- 2 cloves garlic, peeled and finely chopped
- 3 tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper

FOR THE MEAT:

- 6 sprigs fresh basil
- 4 8-oz. pieces veal or beef top round, pounded to ¼" thickness



1 tsp. garlic powder
Salt and freshly ground black pepper
4 tbsp. toasted pine nuts, finely chopped
2 hard-cooked eggs, peeled and finely chopped
2 tbsp. raisins
4 cloves garlic, peeled and finely chopped
4 tbsp. freshly grated parmigiano-reggiano
1/4 cup vegetable oil
Leaves from 2 sprigs parsley, chopped

1. FOR THE SAUCE: Put tomatoes, garlic, oil, and 1 cup water into a large saucepan and simmer over medium heat, stirring occasionally, until sauce thickens slightly, about 15 minutes. Season to taste with salt and pepper and set aside.

2. FOR THE MEAT: Chop leaves from 2 of the sprigs of basil and set aside. Working with 1 piece at a time, put meat on a clean surface with one of the narrow ends facing you. Season with some of the garlic powder and salt and pepper to taste. Scatter one-quarter of the pine nuts, eggs, raisins, garlic, basil, and parmigiano-reggiano along edge of meat closest to you, leaving about a 1/2" border on either side. Fold long sides of meat over filling by about 1/2" on either side, roll up snugly, and tie securely with kitchen twine.

3. Heat oil in a medium heavy-bottomed pot with a tight-fitting lid over medium-high heat. Add braciolo and brown all over, about 5 minutes. Add reserved sauce, scraping browned bits stuck to bottom of pot with a wooden spoon. Season to taste with salt and pepper and bring to a simmer. Cover pot, reduce heat to medium-low, and gently simmer, turning braciolo occasionally, until very tender, about 1 1/2 hours for the veal or about 3 hours for the beef.

4. Transfer braciolo to a cutting board; cut off and discard twine. Slice braciolo crosswise and transfer to four warm plates. Spoon sauce on and around braciolo and garnish with parsley and the remaining 4 sprigs basil.



VEAL SWEETBREAD-STUFFED LETTUCE LEAVES IN BROTH

(Lattughe Ripiene in Brodo)

SERVES 8

ON A VISIT TO ITALY we dined at a delightful restaurant called Ca'Peo in Leivi, in the hills above Chiavari, about 30 miles east of Genoa. This recipe was their version of a traditional Genoese Easter dish they serve all year long.

1 oz. dried porcini mushrooms, rinsed
2 slices country-style Italian bread, about 1/4" thick, crusts removed
1/4 cup milk
Salt
1/4 lb. veal sweetbreads
2 tbsp. butter
1 yellow onion, peeled and chopped
1 clove garlic, peeled and minced
1/2 lb. veal loin, coarsely chopped
1 bay leaf
Freshly ground black pepper
2 tbsp. pine nuts, toasted
1 tbsp. finely chopped fresh oregano
1 tbsp. finely chopped fresh parsley
1/4 cup freshly grated parmigiano-reggiano
Pinch freshly ground nutmeg
1 egg plus 1 egg yolk, lightly beaten
3 heads butter lettuce, washed and separated
8 cups rich chicken stock, warm

1. Soak mushrooms in a bowl of warm water until soft, about 15 minutes. In another

bowl, soak bread in milk until liquid is absorbed.

2. Bring a small saucepan of salted water to a boil over high heat. Add sweetbreads and blanch for 2 minutes. Drain and refresh in cold water. Remove and discard visible membranes, chop, and set aside.

3. Melt butter in a medium skillet over medium heat. Add onions, cook for 5 minutes, then add garlic and cook, stirring occasionally, for 5 minutes more. Increase heat to medium-high; add sweetbreads, veal loin, and bay leaf. Season with salt and pepper and cook, stirring occasionally, until meat is brown, 5–7 minutes. Discard bay leaf, and stir in pine nuts, oregano, and parsley; set aside to cool.

4. Drain, rinse, and chop mushrooms. Transfer to a food processor, add meat mixture, and pulse until coarsely ground. Add bread, parmigiano-reggiano, nutmeg, egg, egg yolk, and salt and pepper. Pulse until smooth.

5. Meanwhile, bring a small saucepan of salted water to a boil over high heat. Blanch 24 large lettuce leaves, a few at a time, until just wilted, 2–5 seconds. Set leaves aside on a clean work surface.

6. To assemble, place 2 tbsp. filling in each leaf. Fold in rib and top edge, then sides, to form a bundle. Continue until all filling is used. Place bundles (folded side down) in a large deep skillet. Pour stock into skillet, cover, and bring to a simmer over medium heat, about 5 minutes. Transfer bundles to individual soup bowls, allowing 3 per serving. Ladle broth over top. Serve with parmigiano-reggiano, if desired.

RED SNAPPER WITH TOMATO SAUCE, OLIVES, AND ONIONS

(Cernia alla Livornese)

SERVES 4

A SPECIALTY OF THE Tuscan port of Leghorn (Livorno), this recipe reflects

the ingredients of the region—fresh seafood, olives, and wine.

- 1/4 cup extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 medium yellow onion, peeled and slivered
- 4 8-oz. center-cut skinless red snapper filets
- 1/4 cup dry white wine
- 1 14-oz. can diced tomatoes
- 1/4 cup black olives, pitted and halved
- 1/2 bunch parsley, chopped
- Pinch red pepper flakes
- Salt

1. Heat oil in a large skillet over medium heat, add onions, and cook, stirring

occasionally, until onions are fragrant and slightly soft, about 2 minutes. Add snapper, skinned side up, and cook until lightly golden, about 2 minutes. Turn fish and cook another 2 minutes.

2. Add wine, tomatoes, olives, half the parsley, and red pepper flakes to the pan with the fish. Season to taste with salt and bring to a simmer over medium heat. Reduce heat to medium-low and simmer, partially covered, until fish is just cooked through, 10–15 minutes, spooning sauce over fish as it cooks. Uncover and simmer until sauce has thickened slightly, about 3 minutes. Adjust seasonings and sprinkle with remaining parsley.



SWEET-AND-SOUR SALT COD

(*Baccalà Dolceforte*)

SERVES 4 – 6

THE IDEA OF COOKING fish with pine nuts and raisins dates back to Roman times. Taste the pine nuts before adding them; they go rancid fast.

- 1 lb. salt cod, in 3 or 4 pieces
- 1 cup flour
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 1/2 cup safflower oil
- 6 cloves garlic, peeled and crushed
- 5 fresh sage leaves, chopped
- 1/2 cup golden raisins
- 3 tbsp. white wine vinegar
- 1 28-oz. can whole peeled plum tomatoes
- 6 tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 small yellow onion, peeled and finely chopped
- 4 tbsp. pine nuts

1. Soak cod in a large bowl of cold water for 24–48 hours (depending on saltiness of fish), changing water 3–4 times per day. Drain, pat dry, and cut into 2" × 1/2" pieces. Put flour into a bowl, season with salt and pepper, then dredge cod, shaking off excess.

2. Put safflower oil, 2 cloves of the garlic, and half the sage into a large skillet





and heat over medium-high heat until hot but not smoking. Fry cod, in two batches if necessary, turning once, until golden brown, 3–5 minutes per side. Drain cod on paper towels, discarding garlic and sage, and set aside.

3. Put raisins, vinegar, and 3 tbsp. water into a small bowl and set aside until raisins are soft, about 10 minutes. Drain tomatoes, reserving $\frac{1}{2}$ cup juice, then finely chop and set aside. Mince the remaining 4 cloves garlic. Heat olive oil in a large skillet over medium heat, add onions and garlic, and cook, stirring often, until soft, about 5 minutes. Add tomatoes and juice and cook, stirring often, until tomatoes are very soft and mixture has thickened, 30–40 minutes.

4. Add 2 tbsp. of the pine nuts, remaining sage, and raisin mixture to same skillet and cook until liquid evaporates and mixture begins to fry, 15 minutes. Add cod and remaining pine nuts and cook, gently stirring, until heated through, 5–10 minutes. Adjust seasonings.

ROASTED DUNGENESS CRAB

SERVES 4

CHEF REED HEARON created this spicy dish while he was executive chef at the popular San Francisco eatery Rose Pistola.

- 1 tsp. fennel seeds, toasted and crushed
- 1 bunch fresh parsley, trimmed
- 2 tsp. fresh thyme leaves
- 2 cloves garlic, peeled
- 1 tbsp. red pepper flakes
- $\frac{1}{3}$ cup extra-virgin olive oil
- 2 cooked 2-lb. dungeness crabs
- 1 lemon, quartered

1. Combine fennel seeds, parsley, thyme, garlic, red pepper flakes, and oil in a food processor. Pulse until puréed.

2. Pull top shell off crabs and remove gray gills. Scoop out and discard any soft

fat. Crack legs with a nutcracker and split crabs in half down middle. Place in a shallow baking dish, pour marinade over crabs, cover, and refrigerate for 2 hours.

3. Preheat oven to 400°. Roast crabs, uncovered, until golden brown, about 10 minutes. Cut crabs into sections between the legs and garnish with lemon quarters.

ROASTED SEA BASS FILETS WITH CHANTERELLES

(*Scaloppa di Branzino Arrostita con Finferli*)

SERVES 2

WE ENJOYED THIS DISH at Trattoria Risorta in Trieste. Striped bass makes a good substitute for the locally fished sea bass they used.

- Vegetable oil
- 8 sprigs parsley
- 1 $2\frac{1}{2}$ –3-lb. whole striped bass, cleaned and fileted, head and bones reserved
- 8 tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 medium yellow onion, peeled and chopped
- 1 medium carrot, peeled, trimmed, and chopped
- 1 rib celery, trimmed and chopped
- 6 bay leaves
- 1 cup chardonnay or other white wine
- 1 tbsp. tomato paste
- 1 tbsp. flour
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 6 oz. chanterelles, cleaned, trimmed, and quartered



1. Preheat oven to 350°. Pour vegetable oil into a deep medium pot to a depth of 1" and heat over medium heat to 325° on a candy thermometer. Pick leaves from 2 of the sprigs of the parsley and fry in oil until crisp, about 30 seconds. Drain on paper towels and set aside. Cut fish filets in half crosswise with a sharp knife, then score skin in a crosshatch pattern and set aside. Chop fish bones and head into large pieces and set aside.

2. Heat 2 tbsp. of the olive oil in a heavy-bottomed medium roasting pan on top of stove over medium-high heat. Add onions, carrots, celery, bay leaves, and remaining 6 sprigs parsley and cook, stirring often, until just softened, 3–5 minutes. Add fish bones and head and cook, stirring often, until bones begin to turn golden brown, 3–4 minutes. Add wine and tomato paste and cook, scraping browned bits stuck to bottom of pan, until alcohol evaporates, about 2 minutes. Whisk flour and 2 cups water together in a bowl until smooth, then stir into pan and bring to a boil. Transfer pan to oven and roast until liquid has reduced by about half, 25–30 minutes.

3. Strain liquid through a large sieve into a medium bowl, pressing on solids with back of spoon (you should have about 1 cup liquid). Discard solids. Set aside $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of the liquid and put the remaining $\frac{3}{4}$ cup liquid into jar of blender. With motor running, gradually add 2 tbsp. of the olive oil through hole in top of blender lid, puréeing until sauce is emulsified. Transfer sauce to a small saucepan, season to taste with salt and pepper, and keep warm over lowest heat.

4. Heat 1 tbsp. of the olive oil in a medium skillet over medium heat. Add mushrooms and cook, stirring occasionally, until they begin to brown, 3–5 minutes. Add reserved $\frac{1}{4}$ cup liquid and season to taste with salt and pepper. Remove skillet from heat, cover, and set aside.

5. Heat 2 tbsp. of the olive oil in a large skillet over high heat. Season fish filets with salt and pepper to taste and sear in skillet, skin side down, until skin is

golden and crisp, 1–1½ minutes. Turn filets, reduce heat to medium, and cook until fish is just cooked through, 2–5 minutes.

6. To serve, divide fish between two warm plates, placing them skin side up. Top fish with mushrooms, then spoon sauce over mushrooms and around fish. Drizzle each plate with some of the remaining 1 tbsp. olive oil and garnish with fried parsley.

MIXED FRIED SEAFOOD AND VEGETABLES

(Fritto Misto)

SERVES 4

FOR THIS VENETIAN classic, we went to the experts: Al Covo, the restaurant with the best fritto misto in Venice.

¼ cup cornstarch
1½ cups all-purpose flour
1½ cups cake flour
Sparkling mineral water
Salt and freshly ground black pepper
¼ lb. whole small shrimp, peeled

¼ lb. sole filet, cut into 2" x 3" pieces
¼ lb. squid, cleaned and cut into rings
and tentacle pieces
¼ lb. bay scallops
Peanut oil
Grapeseed oil
¼ lb. green beans, trimmed
1 red bell pepper, stemmed, cored,
seeded, and sliced into strips
1 medium zucchini, trimmed and thinly
sliced

1. Mix cornstarch and ⅓ cup of each of the flours with 1 cup of sparkling water until it reaches the consistency of a thin batter, adding more water if necessary. Season to taste with salt and pepper, cover, and refrigerate for 2 hours.

2. Chill the shrimp, sole, and squid together in one bowl of ice water and the scallops in another.

3. Preheat oven to lowest setting. Pour equal amounts of peanut and grapeseed oil into a large, heavy skillet to a depth of 2". Heat over high heat until hot but not smoking. Mix together remaining all-purpose and cake flours. Drain shrimp, sole, and squid and dredge in flour. Fry in batches until

seafood is crisp, about 2 minutes. Drain on paper towels, then transfer to oven to keep warm. Drain scallops, dredge in flour, and fry until crisp, about 1½ minutes. Drain and transfer to oven.

4. Dip the vegetables into reserved batter and fry in batches until crisp, about 2 minutes. Combine the vegetables and seafood on a platter, sprinkle with salt and serve with lemon wedges, if you like.

SOLE ROASTED WITH SEASONED BREAD CRUMBS

(Sogliola alla Riminese)

SERVES 4

THE ZESTY, garlicky sauces complement the delicate flavor of dover sole in this favorite dish from Vincenti Ristorante in Los Angeles.

FOR THE TOMATO-HERB SAUCE:

2 sprigs fresh parsley, chopped
7 fresh chives, chopped
3 sprigs fresh tarragon, chopped
3 sprigs fresh dill, chopped
1 small tomato, diced
¾ cup extra-virgin olive oil

FOR THE GARLIC SAUCE:

Cloves from 1 head garlic, peeled
1 egg yolk
¼ bunch parsley, chopped
Juice of ½ lemon
½ cup extra-virgin olive oil

FOR THE FISH:

½ cup bread crumbs
¼ bunch parsley, chopped
8 sprigs fresh tarragon, chopped
4 small cloves garlic, peeled and minced
1 tsp. red pepper flakes
¼ cup extra-virgin olive oil
Salt
4 1-lb. dover sole, heads and tails removed, top sides skinned

1. FOR THE TOMATO-HERB SAUCE: Mix together parsley, chives, tarragon,



dill, tomatoes, and olive oil in a small bowl and set aside.

2. FOR THE GARLIC SAUCE: Put garlic in a small saucepan with 1 cup cold water. Bring to a boil over medium-high heat, then drain. Repeat process 6 times, always starting with cold water. Place softened garlic, egg yolk, parsley, lemon juice, and olive oil in a blender; blend until creamy. Set aside.

3. FOR THE FISH: Preheat oven to 450°. Mix together bread crumbs, parsley, tarragon, garlic, and red pepper flakes in a small bowl. Brush each fish with olive oil, season with salt, then dust top side with bread crumb mixture. Place fish on an oiled baking sheet and bake until bread crumbs are browned and fish is opaque, 7–10 minutes. Filet each fish, then serve with tomato–herb and garlic sauces.



COD BRANDADE

SERVES 4

BRANDADE IS AN Italian dish made with salt cod, garlic, olive oil, and cream. Our version is based on one created by Tom Colicchio at the New York City's Gramercy Tavern.

- 1 small head garlic
- 1 cup heavy cream

- 1/2 cup diced yukon gold potato
- 1 bay leaf
- 1 sprig fresh thyme
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 1 1/2 lbs. fresh cod filet, 2" thick
- 2 tbsp. peanut oil
- 2 tbsp. prepared tapenade

1. Preheat oven to 400°. Wrap garlic in foil and bake for 35 minutes. Cool garlic, cut top off its head, and use a knife to squeeze meat from peel. Prepare the brandade in a heavy saucepan. Cook garlic, cream, potatoes, bay leaf, thyme, and salt and pepper to taste over low heat until potatoes are almost done, 5–7 minutes. Place 1/2 lb. of the cod in a roasting pan, pour cream mixture over it, and bake until the fish is completely cooked, 10–15 minutes. Strain sauce into medium-size saucepan, discard thyme, and reserve vegetables and fish. Over moderate heat, reduce sauce by half, remove from heat, add vegetables, flake fish into sauce, then cover and keep warm.

2. Lower oven to 350°. Season remaining cod with salt and pepper. Heat peanut oil in a heavy skillet over high heat. Brown fish on both sides, then roast in oven for 10 minutes or until firm. Meanwhile, reheat sauce over a low flame. To serve, spoon brandade on bottom of large serving platter and place roasted filets on top. Place dollops of tapenade on top of fish and serve.

STUFFED CALAMARI IN GRAVY

SERVES 6 – 8

THE NORTH BEACH neighborhood of San Francisco is one of the most famous Italian quarters in America and is home to the “old stoves”—the complimentary slang term used to describe an accomplished cook. This recipe is perhaps the quintessential “old stove” dish.

- 1/2 cup olive oil
- 2 onions, finely chopped
- 8 cloves garlic, chopped
- 1 tbsp. each chopped fresh oregano, basil, and marjoram
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper



- 1 28-oz. can tomato sauce
- 1 6-oz. can tomato paste
- 1 cup chopped fresh parsley
- 2 cups fresh bread crumbs
- 1/3 cup Three-Cheese Mixture (see recipe, page 91)
- 2 eggs, beaten
- 2–3 lbs. small squid bodies (3"–4"), cleaned

1. Heat half the olive oil in a heavy pot, and cook onions and 6 cloves garlic over medium heat until soft. Add oregano, basil, marjoram, and salt and pepper to taste; cook for 5 minutes. Add tomato sauce, tomato paste, and 2 cups water. Simmer for at least 30 minutes, adding half the parsley when sauce is cooked. If you have the time you can simmer the sauce for as long as 4 hours, adding a bit more water if sauce thickens too much.

2. Combine bread crumbs, cheese mixture, remaining garlic, 1/3 cup of the parsley, eggs, and salt and pepper to taste. Stuff squid with bread crumb mixture, then secure tops with toothpicks.

3. Heat remaining olive oil in a large skillet and sauté squid in small batches until browned on all sides, about 2–4 minutes. Drain on paper towels.

4. When all squid is cooked, add squid to tomato sauce and cook for 15 minutes longer. Garnish with remaining parsley.

SHRIMP SCAMPI

SERVES 6

PURISTS MAY NOTE that this Italian-American specialty isn't really scampi (Adriatic crayfish)—but as its name promises, it really is shrimp cooked scampi-style.

2 lbs. large shrimp, peeled, deveined, and butterflied
1 cup flour
1 cup extra-virgin olive oil
1½ cups dry white wine
1 tbsp. worcestershire sauce, or more to taste
5 cloves garlic, peeled and minced
Juice of 1½ lemons (about 5 tbsp.)
½ cup chicken stock
¼ lb. butter, cut into small pieces
Salt and freshly ground black pepper
2 tbsp. minced fresh parsley

1. Dredge shrimp in flour and set aside. Meanwhile, heat oil in a large skillet over high heat. Working in batches, sauté shrimp until just golden, about 2 minutes. Transfer to a paper-towel-lined plate to absorb excess oil. Repeat process until all shrimp have been sautéed.

2. Drain and discard excess oil from pan, then stir in wine, worcestershire sauce, garlic, lemon juice, and stock. Cook over high heat until sauce is reduced by half, about 5 minutes. Whisk in butter, and season to taste with salt and pepper. Lower heat to medium and add shrimp to reheat, tossing to coat well with sauce, about 1 minute. Sprinkle with parsley just before serving. Serve over linguine, if you like.

HUNTER'S WIFE'S CHICKEN

(Pollo alla Cacciatora)

SERVES 4

AMERICANS KNOW this Italian favorite as chicken cacciatore (hunter's-style), but it's really *alla cacciatora*, named in honor of the hunter's wife—who, all over

northern Italy, might traditionally cook the dish on the eve of the hunt as fuel for the chase.

4 tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil
2 medium onions, peeled and chopped
2 cloves garlic, peeled and minced
1 3-lb. chicken, cut into 8 pieces
1 cup dry white wine
1 28-oz. can peeled whole san marzano tomatoes, chopped, juice reserved
1 bay leaf
1 tsp. minced fresh rosemary leaves
¼ cup minced flat-leaf parsley
Salt and freshly ground black pepper
1 cup strong chicken stock

1. Heat oil in a large pan over medium-high heat. Add onions and cook, stirring occasionally, until soft, about 10 minutes. Add garlic and cook, continuing to stir, for about 2 minutes more. Push onions to sides of pan, then add chicken and fry, turning pieces several times to brown evenly, about 4 minutes per side.

2. Add wine and cook until it evaporates, about 5 minutes. Add tomatoes, with their juice, to chicken. Stir in bay leaf, rosemary, and parsley (reserving 1 tbsp. or so for garnish) and season to taste with salt and pepper. Reduce heat to low, partially cover, and simmer, adding stock gradually as tomato juice evaporates, for 45 minutes. Garnish with reserved parsley. Serve with steamed potatoes or white rice.

FISH AND VEGETABLE SALAD

(Capon Magro)

SERVES 8 – 10

THIS GENOESE CLASSIC, which may have been invented to use up leftovers, has evolved into an elaborate set piece of fish and vegetables.

3 ship's biscuits, halved (cortibros.biz; 800/509-3663)
5 cloves garlic, peeled; 1 whole, 4 minced
1 cup red wine vinegar

Salt

3 large carrots, peeled
1 medium zucchini
2 medium potatoes, peeled
2 medium beets, peeled
½ lb. green beans, trimmed
½ head cauliflower, cored
10 baby artichokes
1¾ cups extra-virgin olive oil
Freshly ground black pepper
10 large shrimp or prawns, unpeeled
1 2-lb. cod filet
4 slices country-style Italian bread, ½" thick, crusts removed
2 cups packed fresh parsley leaves
2 tbsp. pine nuts
6 hard-cooked eggs; 5 whole; 1 sliced
20 oil-packed anchovy filets, drained and finely chopped
¼ cup large capers, drained

FOR GARNISH:

10 green or black olives, pitted
10 oil-packed baby mushrooms
10 pickled cherry peppers
10 oysters, such as blue point

1. Rub cut-side of each ship's biscuit with whole garlic clove. Place biscuits on a platter and sprinkle with ¼ cup of the vinegar and ½ cup water.

2. Bring a pot of salted water to a boil over high heat. Trim and cut carrots, zucchini, potatoes, and beets into ½"-thick slices; cut green beans in thirds; divide cauliflower into florets; trim and quarter artichokes. Cook each separately (begin with artichokes and end with beets) until tender. Drain and refresh in cold water. Dress vegetables (keep each kind separate) with 1 generous tbsp. each vinegar and oil. Season with salt and pepper.

3. Bring a medium pot of salted water to a boil. Add shrimp and cook until pink and firm, 1–2 minutes. Drain and set aside. Place cod in a large skillet, add enough water to cover, season with salt, and bring just to a simmer over medium heat, cooking until fish flakes, 12–15 minutes. Drain, cool, flake, and dress with oil and vinegar. Set aside.



4. Place bread in a bowl, add 2 tbsp. of the vinegar and $\frac{1}{4}$ cup water, and set aside until liquid is absorbed. Transfer to a food processor; add remaining garlic, parsley, pine nuts, 3 of the egg yolks (coarsely chop the whites and set them aside), one-third of the anchovies, half the capers, and $\frac{3}{4}$ cup water. Purée until smooth, then drizzle in 1 cup of the oil. Add more water if sauce is too thick.

5. To assemble, spread remaining anchovies on ship's biscuits, top with alternating layers of vegetables (one kind per layer) and cod (about 3 layers total). Spread a bit of sauce over each layer of cod; insert sliced egg and chopped white midway through. Layer until all ingredients are used up; finish with potatoes. Spread sauce on top. Quarter remaining eggs; use to garnish with shrimp, olives, mushrooms, peppers, and oysters.

CHICKEN "DEVIL STYLE"

(Pollo alla Diavola)

SERVES 4 – 8

THE TRUE "DEVIL STYLE" chicken is liberally seasoned with red pepper flakes, but at Il Fico Vecchio in Grottaferrata, near Rome, the chef omitted the spice, as below—he said his customers had timid palates, and that he would only add the pepper upon request.

2 3½-lb. chickens
3 lemons
 $\frac{3}{4}$ cup extra-virgin olive oil
Salt and freshly ground black pepper

1. Using a sharp knife or kitchen shears, butterfly chickens by cutting along both sides of the backbone. Discard backbones, or save for making stock. Rinse birds, and pat dry with paper towels. Place each butterflied

chicken on a cutting board skin side up, and roll a rolling pin on it, leaning heavily on the pin to flatten the birds.

2. Place chicken in a wide deep dish. Squeeze the juice from 2 of the lemons over bird, add $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of the oil, and season to taste with salt and lots of pepper. Set aside to marinate for 30–60 minutes.

3. Meanwhile, preheat grill. Squeeze juice from the remaining lemon into a small bowl, whisk in the remaining $\frac{1}{4}$ cup oil, and season to taste with salt and lots of pepper, then set aside.

4. Remove chickens from marinade; discard marinade. Grill birds over medium-hot coals, basting occasionally with the reserved lemon and oil, until skin is well browned on both sides and thigh juices run clear when pricked with a fork, about 50 minutes. Set chickens aside to rest for 10 minutes, then cut into quarters.



FRICASSÉED CHICKEN WITH BAY LEAVES

(Pollo in Tegame con l'Alloro)

SERVES 4

ITALIAN COOKING, says cookbook author and teacher Marcella Hazan, requires a "rigorous economy of means"—proof of this is demonstrated in this recipe from Mara Martin, a respected Venetian chef.

1 3½-lb. chicken, cut into 8 pieces
2 tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil
1 small onion, peeled and finely chopped
2 tbsp. finely chopped fresh parsley
1 small rib celery, finely chopped
1 clove garlic, peeled and crushed
4 bay leaves
Salt and freshly ground black pepper
 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup dry white wine

1. Rinse chicken, pat dry, then set aside. Heat oil in a large heavy-bottomed skillet over medium-high heat. Add onions and cook, stirring frequently, until golden, 3–5 minutes.





2. Add parsley, celery, and garlic. Cook, stirring frequently, for 1 minute. Push onion mixture to sides of pan, then add chicken, skin side down. Cook chicken until skin browns, about 5 minutes, then turn and brown other side, for about 5 minutes more. Add bay leaves and season with salt and pepper.

3. When chicken is thoroughly browned, add wine and simmer, scraping browned bits from bottom of pan, for 3 minutes. Add 3 tbsp. water, cover, and reduce heat to low. Cook until chicken comes away from bones easily, about 45 minutes. Remove and discard bay leaves, then serve.

TONY'S EGGPLANT PARMESAN

(Melanzane alla Parmigiana)

SERVES 4

THIS SOUTHERN ITALIAN classic might be named after the cheese that tops it, but some Sicilians think the title comes from *palmigiana*, their dialect word for “shutter,” describing the way the eggplant slices are often overlapped. This recipe came to us from Tony Catarinichia of Gian-Tony's Ristorante in St. Louis, Missouri.

1 cup extra-virgin olive oil
2 cloves garlic, peeled and minced
1 28-oz. can crushed Italian tomatoes
Salt and freshly ground black pepper

Flour
3 eggs
1½ cups dried plain bread crumbs, sifted
1 large eggplant
12 fresh basil leaves, torn into pieces
¼ cup freshly grated parmigiano-reggiano
¾ cup grated provolone

1. Preheat oven to 375°. Heat ¼ cup of the oil and garlic in a medium saucepan over medium heat until garlic is fragrant, about 1 minute. Add tomatoes, season to taste with salt and pepper, and simmer, stirring, until sauce thickens, about 30 minutes.

2. Meanwhile, place flour in a shallow dish. Beat eggs together in another shallow dish. Mix bread crumbs with a generous pinch of salt and pepper in a third shallow dish. Set dishes aside.

3. Peel and trim eggplant and slice lengthwise into ½" pieces. Dredge each slice first in the flour, then in the egg, then in the seasoned bread crumbs.

4. Heat remaining ¾ cup oil in a large cast-iron skillet over medium-high heat until oil is hot but not smoking. Add breaded eggplant slices to the hot oil (working in batches, if needed) and cook until golden on both sides and dark brown on the edges, 2–3 minutes per side.

5. Spread a thin layer of tomato sauce in the bottom of a large shallow ovenproof dish. Arrange eggplant in a single layer on top of tomato sauce. Spoon remaining sauce over eggplant. Scatter basil on top of sauce and sprinkle with parmigiano-reggiano, then provolone. Bake until sauce is bubbling and cheese is melted, about 20 minutes.

CHICKEN WITH GREEN OLIVES

(Pollo con Olive Verdi Ascolane)

SERVES 4

ASCOLANE OLIVES are the renowned olives of the Marche region of Italy. They have a meaty texture with a delicate saltiness that

perfectly complements the other ingredients in this dish.

3 tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil
1 2½–3-lb. chicken, with giblets, cut into 14–16 pieces
4 large cloves garlic, unpeeled
1 oz. prosciutto, finely chopped
1 tbsp. chopped fresh rosemary leaves
2–4 pinches dried red pepper flakes
Salt and freshly ground black pepper
1 medium yellow onion, peeled and finely chopped
20 large mild green olives, such as bella di cerignola
1 cup dry white wine

1. Heat oil in a large skillet over medium heat. Add chicken, giblets, garlic, prosciutto, rosemary, and red pepper; season to taste with salt and pepper. Cook, stirring occasionally, until chicken is deep golden on all sides, about 25 minutes.

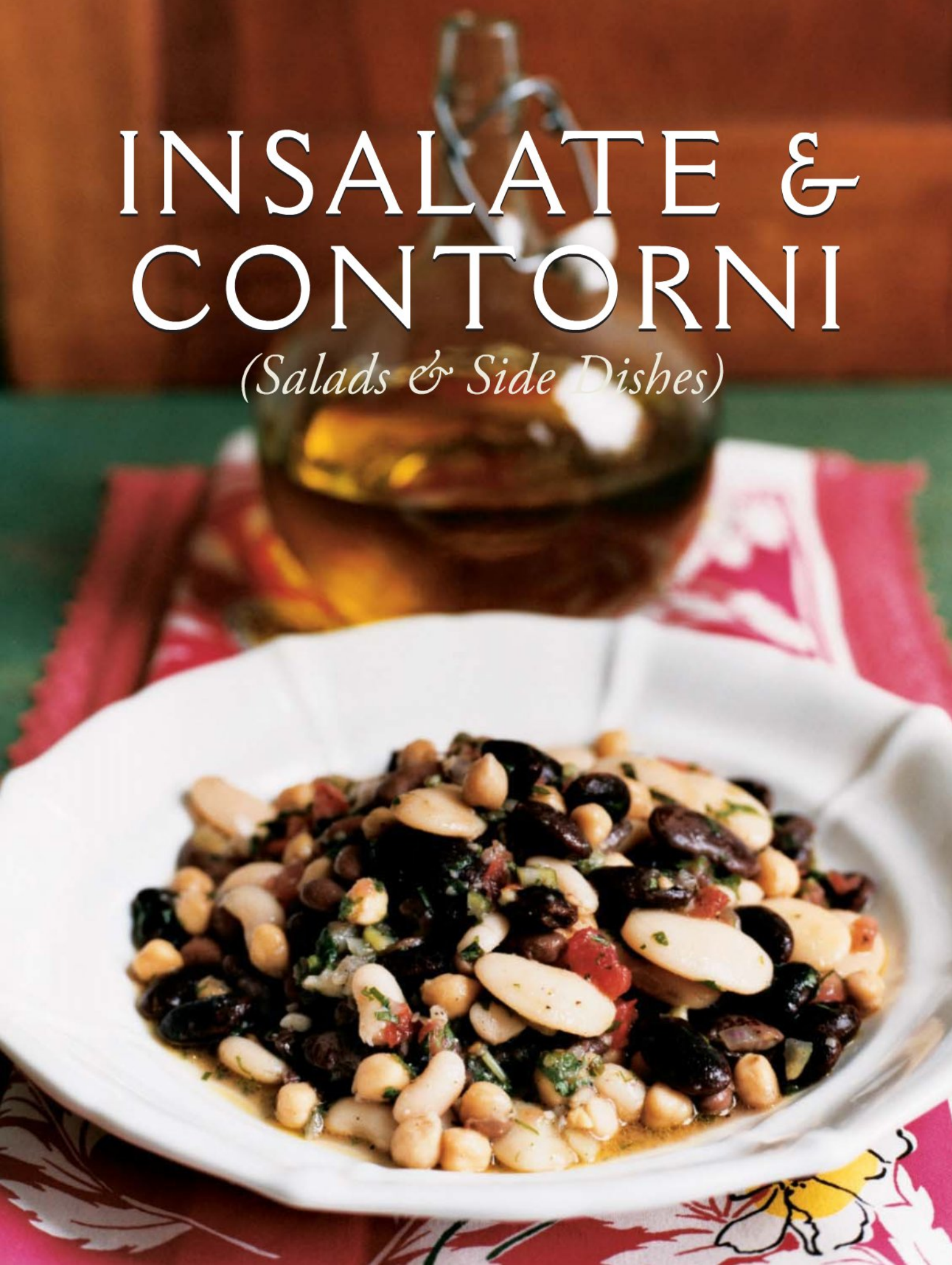
2. Add onions and olives and cook, stirring often, until onions begin to soften, about 5 minutes. Remove skillet from heat and carefully pour off and discard all but about 2 tbsp. of the rendered fat. Remove garlic and squeeze garlic out of its skins back into the skillet, discarding skins.

3. Return skillet to medium-high heat, add wine, and scrape up browned bits stuck to bottom of skillet. Cook, stirring once or twice, until sauce thickens, about 5 minutes.



INSALATE & CONTORNI

(Salads & Side Dishes)



SEVEN-BEAN SALAD

(Insalata Sette)

SERVES 6 – 8

FOR THIS SALAD, Cesare Casella (former chef of Beppe in New York City), used only imported Tuscan dried beans. Use a mixture of beans that is pleasingly varied in color, size, and texture. Overnight refrigeration is required.

1/2 cup each of a variety of 7 dried beans, such as zolfini, scritti, corona, diavoli, sorana, del papa, and coco di mamma, each soaked separately in the refrigerator overnight (republicofbeans.com; 212/982-8274)

7 brewing bags or sachets, each filled with 3 cloves peeled garlic, 1 leaf sage, 1 sprig thyme, and 1 sprig rosemary (hirokoskitchen.com; 212/727-3085)

Salt and freshly ground black pepper
2 ripe tomatoes, cored, seeded, and diced

3 ribs celery, finely diced

1 medium red onion, peeled and finely diced

Leaves from 1/2 bunch parsley, chopped

1 cup extra-virgin olive oil

3–4 tbsp. red wine vinegar

1. Working in batches if necessary, drain beans and put each variety into a separate small pot. Add 1 sachet to each pot and cover beans with cold water by 3". Cook beans over medium heat until just tender, about 1–2 1/2 hours, depending on the size and age of beans. Remove pots from heat, season each to taste with salt and pepper, and set beans aside in their cooking liquid to let cool to room temperature.

2. Remove and discard sachet from each pot. Drain beans and put them into a large ovenproof bowl. Add tomatoes, celery, onions, parsley, oil, vinegar, and salt and pepper to taste. Gently toss until beans are well coated. Cover bowl with heavy-duty foil and marinate salad in the refrigerator overnight.

3. The following day, preheat oven to 300°. Remove bowl from refrigerator and transfer to oven. Heat salad until just warmed through but not cooked any further, about 15 minutes. Adjust seasonings. Serve salad warm.



THE BIG MUSHROOM SALAD

SERVES 4

THIS DISH APPEARS in two of Italian chef Antonio Carluccio's mushroom books. In *A Passion for Mushrooms* (Salem House, 1989) he advises blanching the mushrooms; in *The Complete Mushroom Book* (Quadrille Publishing, 2003) he boils the fungi in vinegary water to pickle them slightly, as below. The salad may be served warm or cold.

2 1/4 lbs. mixed fresh wild mushrooms (auxdelices.com; 888/547-5471)

3 tbsp. salt

2 cups white wine vinegar

1/2 cup olive oil

2 garlic cloves, sliced

2 slices fresh hot red chile pepper

Salt and pepper to taste

1 tbsp. each minced parsley and

cilantro

1 lemon, halved

1. Clean the mushrooms as appropriate and cut to roughly the same size. Bring 6 cups water to a boil and add salt and vinegar. Add mushrooms and cook for 10 minutes. Drain well and cool.

2. In a pan, heat the oil and sauté the garlic and chiles to soften. Add the mushrooms, heat through, and taste for seasoning. Stir in the herbs and serve immediately, sprinkled with lemon juice.

SEAFOOD SALAD

SERVES 6

ACCORDING TO THE *Rao's Cookbook* (Random House, 1998), which is filled with recipes from the legendary East Harlem restaurant, this seafood salad is "perhaps the most popular dish at Rao's," and one whose simplicity epitomizes Rao's style.

1 lb. fresh whole small squid

1 1/2 cups fresh lemon juice

1 tbsp. salt

1/2 cup extra-virgin olive oil

2 cloves garlic, peeled and halved

1 tsp. chopped fresh parsley

Salt and freshly ground black pepper

8 large shrimp, cooked, peeled, deveined, and quartered

1 cup cooked lump crabmeat

1 lb. cooked lobster meat, cut in large pieces

1 lemon, cut into 8 wedges

1. Cut off squid tentacles just above the eyes. Remove and discard beak and set tentacles aside. Pull out and discard entrails and transparent quill from body of each squid. Put bodies and tentacles in a medium pot, and cover with 1 quart of cold water, 1 cup of the lemon juice, and salt. Bring to a boil over high heat, reduce heat to medium, and simmer until squid is tender, about 5 minutes. Drain and rinse squid in cold water. Rub bodies and tentacles to remove any skin, then cut into 1/2" rings. Set aside.

2. Whisk together olive oil, remaining lemon juice, garlic, and parsley in a bowl and season to taste with salt and pepper. Set aside for 10 minutes, then remove and discard garlic. Add squid, shrimp, crab, and lobster, and serve with lemon wedges.



METHOD

Tomato and Mozzarella Salad*(Insalata Caprese)*

Serves 4

According to many Italian cooks, you can't make a great insalata caprese (which is named for its probable birthplace, the Isle of Capri) in America, because the mozzarella will never be fresh enough—but you can make a pretty good one. Just use the best mozzarella di bufala you can find, and ripe tomatoes. The ingredients are often sliced, but we like them diced; the salad's easier to eat that way.

Halve and seed 4 ripe, firm tomatoes and cut into a large dice. Cut 1/4 lb. mozzarella into slightly smaller cubes. Place tomatoes and mozzarella in a medium bowl with about 8 small coarsely chopped basil leaves. Dress with up to 1/4 cup extra-virgin olive oil, season to taste with salt and pepper, and serve with slices of crusty bread.

SICILIAN EGGPLANT AND TUNA SALAD*(Caponata alla Siciliana)*

SERVES 8

EGGPLANT IS AN extremely popular vegetable in Sicily, where it's used in scores of ways. Sweet-and-sour flavors, as in this salad, are common to the island's cuisine.

- 3/4 cup extra-virgin olive oil
- 2 medium eggplants, trimmed, peeled, and cut into small cubes
- 3 celery stalks, trimmed and coarsely chopped
- 1 medium yellow onion, peeled and chopped
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 1 medium tomato, coarsely chopped (optional)
- 1/4 cup red wine vinegar
- 1 tbsp. sugar
- 3/4 cup capers
- 1 tbsp. pine nuts
- 1 6-oz. can oil-packed tuna, drained and broken up with a fork
- 1/2 bunch parsley, finely chopped

1. Heat oil in a large, nonreactive skillet over medium-high heat. Add eggplant and sauté until golden, about 10 minutes.

2. Transfer eggplant to a large bowl with a slotted spoon. Reduce heat to medium-low, add celery and onions to skillet, and season to taste with salt and pepper. Cover and cook, stirring occasionally, until vegetables are soft, about 15 minutes. Add tomatoes to skillet, if using. Cover skillet and cook 10 minutes more. Return eggplant and all the accumulated juices to skillet.

3. Meanwhile, stir together vinegar and sugar in a small saucepan over medium heat until sugar dissolves, about 1 minute, then add to eggplant. Stir capers and pine nuts into skillet, cover, and cook 5 minutes more. Remove skillet from heat and set aside to cool, then mix in tuna and parsley. Serve slightly warm or at room temperature.



SALT COD SALAD

(*Insalata di Baccalà*)

SERVES 4

SALT COD IS A staple ingredient in the traditional cooking of Italian fishermen, not only in San Francisco's Italian quarter of North Beach, but also in their homeland of Italy.

- 1 lb. salt cod (boneless and skinless)
- 1 lb. russet potatoes
- 1 large bunch parsley
- 1 medium red onion, chopped
- 1/2 cup olive oil
- Freshly ground black pepper

1. Soak salt cod in a large pot of water in refrigerator for 36–48 hours, changing water at least 4 times.
2. Drain salt cod, then return to same pot, add water to barely cover, then bring to a boil. Reduce heat to low and poach salt cod for about 20 minutes, or until tender enough to pierce easily with a knife. Remove salt cod from pot and drain, reserving poaching liquid, then place fish in a large bowl to cool slightly. When it is cool enough to handle, pick through it carefully to remove any pieces of bone, cartilage, or skin.

3. Peel and quarter potatoes, then cook them over medium-high heat in reserved poaching water until tender, about 15 minutes. Drain, allow to cool slightly, then add to salt cod.

4. Wash and trim parsley, discarding stems, then dry and coarsely chop leaves. Add parsley and onions to potatoes and salt cod. Toss carefully (your hands work best), allowing potatoes and fish to break up slightly. Drizzle with olive oil, season with pepper, and toss again. Serve at room temperature or refrigerate until serving (salad will keep for several days if refrigerated).

MARINATED RADICCHIO

(*Radichio di Treviso Marinato*)

SERVES 4

WITH ITS VIBRANT COLOR, smooth texture, and sophisticated taste, radicchio is surprisingly versatile—and definitively Italian! NOTE: This dish requires overnight refrigeration.

- 6 heads treviso radicchio
- 1 cup white wine vinegar
- 5 black peppercorns
- 1 1/2 tsp. salt
- 1 bay leaf
- 1/2 cup extra-virgin olive oil
- Salt and freshly ground pepper
- Hard-cooked egg, finely grated

1. Remove and discard any imperfect outer leaves from treviso radicchio. Quarter heads lengthwise and set aside.
2. Combine vinegar, 3 cups water, peppercorns, salt, and bay leaf in a large pot and bring to a boil. Blanch radicchio wedges, a few at a time, for 1–2 minutes. Blot dry with a towel, squeezing gently to remove as much moisture as possible.
3. Arrange wedges in layers in a glass or ceramic dish. Cover with olive oil, cover with plastic wrap, and refrigerate overnight.
4. When ready to serve, bring radicchio to room temperature, season with salt and pepper, and slice (radicchio may also be served

unsliced). Serve garnished with egg. This dish will keep in the refrigerator for up to 2 weeks.

GREEN RADICCHIO AND EGG SALAD

(*Insalata di Radicchio Zuccherino e Uova*)

SERVES 6

SUGAR-SWEET GREEN radicchio zuccherino is found only in Istria and north-eastern Italy; a good substitute is mâche (lamb's lettuce). The garlic is added in thick slices so it can be picked out by the garlic-shy.

- 6 cups radicchio zuccherino or mâche, washed and dried
- 1 clove garlic, peeled and thickly sliced
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 2 tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 1/2 tbsp. red wine vinegar
- 2 hard-cooked eggs, peeled and quartered

1. Put greens and garlic in a salad bowl. Season to taste with salt and pepper.
2. Toss with olive oil and vinegar. Add eggs, then toss gently one more time. Adjust seasoning if necessary.





FAVA AND PECORINO SALAD

(*Insalata di Baccelli e Pecorino*)

SERVES 2 – 4

TUSCANY-BASED food writer Lori Zimring De Mori makes this dish only with fresh young favas whose skins are so thin and tender that you don't need to peel them. Look for smaller unblemished fava pods and snap a few open to see whether the beans are small and thin skinned.

1½–2 lbs. fresh young favas
6 oz. young Tuscan pecorino
¼ cup fruity extra-virgin olive oil
Salt and freshly ground black pepper

1. Shell favas into a medium bowl. Break pecorino into small chunks into bowl with favas. Drizzle olive oil over favas and cheese and season to taste with salt and pepper. Gently toss salad, then divide among plates.

PORCINI SALAD

(*Insalata di Funghi Porcini*)

SERVES 4

IN ITALY, MUSHROOM DISHES are sometimes flavored with nepitella, or lesser calamint, a wild mint native to southern Europe. Some farmers' markets may occasionally carry calamint, and it isn't hard to grow. On the other hand, conventional mint may be substituted.

4 small to medium fresh porcini
4 thin slices emmentaler cheese
4 small sprigs fresh calamint or fresh mint
Salt and freshly ground black pepper
Extra-virgin olive oil
8 small leaves frisee lettuce

1. Wipe porcini clean of any dirt with a damp paper towel. Trim off tough ends of stems, then slice porcini very thinly with a sharp, thin-bladed knife. Arrange sliced porcini on four plates.

2. Slice cheese into thin strips and arrange over porcini. Coarsely chop calamint leaves and sprinkle over the salad. Season to taste with salt and pepper. Drizzle generously with oil. Garnish with frisee leaves.

BRAISED WHOLE FAVAS

SERVES 6

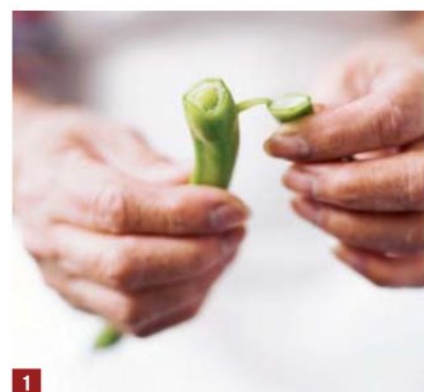
YOUNG FRESH FAVA BEANS are a sign of spring in Italy. Here in the United States, favas are grown along California's Central Coast and are available from April through October.

½ cup extra-virgin olive oil
Grated zest of ½ lemon
⅓ cup fresh lemon juice
2½ lbs. small to medium unshelled favas, rinsed well, trimmed, and strings removed
15 large cloves garlic, peeled and sliced
Sea salt and freshly ground black pepper
2 tbsp. freshly grated pecorino

1. Put olive oil and lemon zest and juice into a large wide heavy nonreactive pot with a tight-fitting lid and heat over medium heat until just warm. Add favas, garlic, and ½ cup water, season to taste with salt and pepper, and stir well to coat pods. Bring to a simmer, reduce heat to medium-low, and cover pot.

2. Braise favas, stirring every 15 minutes or so and adding ½ cup water at a time, if necessary, to prevent favas from sticking to the bottom of the pot, until the pods are completely tender, 1–1½ hours. Uncover pot and gently stir frequently about 5 minutes before favas have finished cooking to allow the pot juices to thicken enough to coat favas well.

3. Transfer favas, garlic, and all their juices to a wide shallow dish, let cool, then cover and refrigerate until well chilled, 8–12 hours. Toss with additional lemon juice, if you like, and sprinkle favas with freshly grated pecorino just before serving. Serve well chilled.



TIP

Getting to the Good Part

Favas take work (the younger ones, with thinner pods, are the most difficult), but these basic techniques help make the task manageable.

Pinch off stem and pull away string along seam of pod **(1)**. Run your thumb-nail down seam, pry shell open, and remove beans **(2)**. To slip beans out of their skins, blanch them for 30 seconds or so, cool them in cold water, hold bean on grooved side, and pinch to slip out bean **(3)**.



CAESAR SALAD

SERVES 4

THIS SALAD WAS reportedly invented by Italian restaurateur Caesar Cardini while he was chef at the famous Hotel Caesar's in Tijuana. We love that establishment's recipe, adapted here.

- 3 heads romaine lettuce
- 1 cup olive oil
- 2 cloves garlic, peeled and crushed
- 1/3 baguette, cut crosswise into 1/4" slices
- Juice of 1 lemon
- 1 tbsp. red wine vinegar
- Dash worcestershire sauce
- 1 egg, coddled for 1 minute
- 1/2 cup freshly grated parmigiano-reggiano
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper

1. Trim about 1" from the bottom of each head of lettuce and peel away all dark green leaves until you reach the pale-green-tipped yellow leaves, or heart of the lettuce (the longest leaves should

be no longer than 7"). Discard outer leaves or save for another use. Separate leaves, wash, then pat dry thoroughly with paper towels; set aside.

2. Heat 2/3 cup of the oil with the garlic in a medium skillet over medium heat until garlic is golden, about 5 minutes, then remove and discard garlic. Fry bread slices in oil in batches until deep golden, 15–20 seconds per side. Use tongs or a slotted spoon to transfer croutons to a plate, and set aside.

3. Put lemon juice, vinegar, and worcestershire sauce in a large wooden salad bowl, crack coddled egg into bowl, and mix vigorously with a wooden spoon or spatula until smooth. Gradually add remaining oil, stirring constantly. Add cheese and season to taste with salt and pepper. Add croutons, then lettuce, and toss well.



BASIC WHITE BEANS

(Fagioli Lessi)

SERVES 6 – 8

IN TUSCANY, white beans are more than just “the poor man’s meat,” they’re a way of life. The zolfini bean is the rarest and is considered the finest bean in this region. NOTE: The cooking time for dried beans may vary; older beans often take longer to soften.

- 1 lb. dried zolfini or cannellini beans
- 4 tbsp. fruity extra-virgin olive oil
- 2 cloves garlic, crushed
- 4–5 fresh sage leaves
- 3–4 whole black peppercorns
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper

1. Sort through beans, discarding any small stones; then rinse beans under cold running water. Put beans in a large earthenware casserole, cover with cold water, and set aside to soak for at least 4 hours or overnight.

2. Drain beans; add 12 cups cold water, 2 tbsp. of the oil, garlic, sage, and peppercorns. Cover casserole, and bring to a simmer over medium heat, about 1 hour. Season to taste with salt, reduce heat to medium-low, and gently simmer, stirring occasionally with



TIP

Puntarelle with Anchovy Dressing

(Puntarelle con Salsa di Acciughe)

Serves 4

Made with the slightly bitter greens from the chicory family, this salad has long been a favorite in Rome. Check your local specialty grocer to find puntarelle.

Wash 1 head of puntarelle and remove any bruised outer leaves. With a paring knife, split the stalks lengthwise. Place puntarelle strips in a large bowl of ice water and soak for 30 minutes. (Strips will become crisp and slightly curled.) Drain and set aside. With a mortar and pestle, grind 4 anchovy filets and 1 peeled clove garlic into a paste, then transfer to a large bowl and whisk in 2 tbsp. fresh lemon juice and 2 tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil. Toss puntarelle with the dressing until leaves are evenly coated. Top with freshly ground black pepper.

a wooden spoon, until bean skins are tender and interiors are soft, about 1–2 hours more.

3. Remove from heat, set aside, and allow beans to cool in the cooking liquid. To serve, reheat beans in the liquid over medium-low heat, drain them, and season to taste with salt and pepper. Drizzle beans with remaining oil.



METHOD

Celery and Anchovies

Serves 1

San Francisco's Zuni Café serves a version of this delicious salad.

Pour a thin puddle of extra-virgin olive oil onto a salad plate. Arrange 1 thinly sliced, trimmed celery rib in a single layer in the oil. Garnish with freshly cracked black pepper, coarse salt, 2 anchovy filets, niçoise olives, and celery leaves.

ROMAN-STYLE ARTICHOKES

(*Carciofi alla Romana*)

SERVES 6

IN ROME, THESE fragrant artichokes are seasoned with mentuccia, a delicate wild mint native to Italy. Purists argue that there is no substitute, but fresh, American-grown mint works just fine.

- 6 long-stemmed artichokes
- 1 lemon, halved
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup chopped fresh mint leaves
- 4 cloves garlic, peeled and minced
- 2 tsp. salt
- 1 cup extra-virgin olive oil
- 2 cups white wine
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 6 leaves red leaf lettuce, for garnish
- 1 bunch watercress, for garnish

1. To clean each artichoke, pull off the tough green outer leaves until you get to the tender leaves that are mostly yellow. Peel stem and slice about 1" off top of artichoke. Spread open leaves and scoop out fibrous white choke, using a spoon. Rub artichokes all over with lemon to prevent discoloration.

2. Stir together mint, garlic, and salt in a mixing bowl. Pack approximately 2 tbsp. mint mixture between leaves and rub a little in the center of each artichoke.

3. Pour $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of the oil into a medium saucepan. Place artichokes stem side up in saucepan and pour wine and remaining oil on top. Cover and cook over medium-low heat until tender (check for tenderness at thickest part of the stem), about 40 minutes. Season to taste with salt and pepper.

4. Transfer artichokes to a platter and allow to cool completely. (They are best when served at room temperature.) Continue to cook juices until reduced by half, then serve as a sauce, drizzled over artichokes. Garnish with red leaf lettuce and watercress. Store artichokes with reduced juices in refrigerator for up to 1 week.



BROILED TOMATOES

SERVES 4 – 6

EUGENIA BONE, author and contributing writer for *SAVEUR*, refers to her Italian heritage—her father's family comes from Le Marche—when she makes these tomatoes.

- 4 medium ripe tomatoes
- 2–3 garlic cloves, peeled and thinly sliced
- 2 sprigs fresh rosemary
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup extra-virgin olive oil
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper

1. Set oven rack in top third of oven, then preheat broiler. Cut tomatoes in half crosswise and arrange in a baking dish, cut side up. Strip leaves from rosemary sprigs and set aside.

2. Stud cut side of tomatoes with the garlic slices and most of the rosemary leaves, sprinkling the remaining rosemary on top. Drizzle tomatoes with oil and season to taste with salt and pepper.

3. Broil tomatoes until garlic begins to brown and tomatoes render juice, 15–20 minutes. Set aside to let cool to room temperature. Spoon rendered juices over tomatoes before serving.

FLORENTINE-STYLE BAKED BEANS

(*Fagioli alla Fiorentina*)

SERVES 6 – 8

THE TUSCAN PASSION for beans dates to the 16th century, when a church canon in Florence potted some type of haricot bean that was a recent arrival from the New World. Found to be extremely tasty, these beans took off in popularity and found themselves in dishes like this one.

- 1 lb. dried zolfini or cannellini beans
- 5 oz. prosciutto, cut into short, thick strips
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup fruity extra-virgin olive oil
- 2 canned Italian plum tomatoes, quartered
- 2 cloves garlic, peeled and crushed
- Sprig fresh sage
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper

1. Put beans in an earthenware casserole, cover with cold water, and set aside to soak at least 4 hours or overnight. Drain, and add cold water to just cover beans.

2. Preheat oven to 375°. Add prosciutto, oil, tomatoes, garlic, and sage to beans; season to taste with salt and pepper. Cover and bake until beans have absorbed all the liquid and are tender, about 2 hours.

METHOD

Grilled Mushrooms

(*Cardilinu Arrustu*)

Serves 4 – 6

If you can't find oyster mushrooms, use any variety that won't fall through the grate of your grill.

Preheat a charcoal grill. Combine 3 chopped peeled garlic cloves, chopped leaves from $\frac{1}{4}$ bunch parsley, $\frac{1}{4}$ cup fruity olive oil, and salt to taste in a small bowl. Grill 1 lb. cleaned, trimmed oyster mushrooms and $\frac{1}{2}$ lb. stemmed white mushrooms over medium-hot coals, gill side up, without turning, basting often with parsley oil, until done, 5–10 minutes.





ROASTED PEPPERS

SERVES 6

PEPPERS ARE ROASTED daily at Rao's in New York. According to the restaurant's cookbook, "The smoky aroma fills the restaurant and lingers until serving time. Always marinated and served at room temperature, our peppers are never held over from one day to the next... freshness ensures their homemade taste."

6 red bell peppers
 1/2 cup extra-virgin olive oil
 3 tbsp. golden raisins
 2 tbsp. pine nuts
 1 tsp. chopped fresh parsley
 1 clove garlic, peeled and minced (optional)
 Salt and freshly ground black pepper

1. Preheat broiler for at least 15 minutes. Broil peppers, turning frequently, until skin has blackened on all sides, about 20 minutes. Remove from broiler and immediately put into a large paper bag. Close bag tightly and allow peppers to steam until cool enough to handle, about 20 minutes. Remove and discard the blackened skins, stems, and seeds, and cut peppers into 1/4" thick strips.

2. Transfer peppers to a colander set into a bowl, and allow to drain until most of the juices have run off, about 3 hours.

3. Place peppers in a medium bowl. Add oil, raisins, pine nuts, parsley, and garlic (if using). Season to taste with salt and pepper and toss to combine. Set aside and allow to marinate for at least 1 hour before serving.

MARINATED ZUCCHINI

SERVES 4 – 8

LIKE MOST marinated vegetables, this dish is best made a day before serving. It will keep, refrigerated, for about a week.

Mild olive oil
 6 sprigs fresh mint

4 medium zucchini, trimmed and cut crosswise into 1/4"-thick slices
 1/4 cup red wine vinegar
 3 cloves garlic, peeled and thinly sliced
 Salt and freshly ground pepper

1. Pour oil into a wide medium pot to a depth of 1" and heat over medium-high heat until temperature reaches 350° on a candy thermometer. Meanwhile, pick leaves from 4 sprigs of the mint, coarsely chop, and set aside. Line a sheet pan with 3–4 layers of paper towels and set aside.

2. Working in batches, fry zucchini in hot oil until lightly browned and soft, 5–6 minutes per batch. Transfer zucchini with a slotted spoon to the paper towels to drain.

3. Arrange half of the zucchini, slightly overlapping, in a wide medium dish. Sprinkle half of the vinegar, chopped mint, and garlic over zucchini and season to taste with salt and pepper. Repeat process with the remaining zucchini, vinegar, chopped mint, and garlic and season to taste with salt and pepper.

4. Cover dish with plastic wrap and refrigerate overnight. Serve zucchini at room temperature, garnished with leaves from the remaining 2 sprigs mint.

SWEET AND SOUR ONIONS

(Cippudeddi Auruduci)

SERVES 6 – 8

THE WILDFLOWER HONEY adds a wonderful flavor to the onions, but if it's hard to find, any honey will do.



METHOD

Grilled Treviso

Serves 6

Two tips for grilling the Italian vegetable radicchio di treviso: Protect the delicate tips with foil to prevent burning, and don't grill for too long or it will turn tough and stringy.

Preheat grill. Place a sheet of heavy-duty foil, about 6" x 18", across a grill rack set over the fire. Halve 3 heads treviso lengthwise, drizzle cut sides with some extra-virgin olive oil, and sprinkle with some coarse salt. When grill is hot, reduce heat to lowest setting or spread coals out to the inside edges of the grill to reduce the heat to medium-low. Lay top half (leafy end) of each treviso half on foil so that bottom half (root end) lies directly on the grill rack. Grill treviso until bottom half is lightly marked and top half is slightly wilted, about 3 minutes per side.

1 3/4 lbs. unpeeled small yellow boiling onions
 2 tbsp. butter
 1 tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil
 1/3 cup white wine vinegar
 1/2 cup wildflower honey
 Freshly ground black pepper

1. Bring a large pot of salted water to a boil over high heat. Add onions and blanch for 2 minutes to loosen peels. Drain onions and, when cool enough to handle, peel.

2. Heat butter and extra-virgin olive oil in a large skillet over medium heat. Add onions, stir to coat with butter and oil, then slowly add vinegar. Cook until vinegar evaporates by a third, about 5 minutes, then stir in honey.

3. Reduce heat to low and cook, stirring occasionally, until onions are tender and sauce is creamy and caramel-colored, 30–40 minutes. Transfer to a large shallow serving bowl and season with freshly ground black pepper. Serve chilled or at room temperature.



ASPARAGUS WITH FRIED EGGS AND PARMIGIANO

(*Asparagi alla Milanese*)

SERVES 4

THE USE OF BUTTER instead of olive oil with asparagus defines this simple, classic preparation as Milanese in style. Some versions omit the egg.

- 2 bunches asparagus, trimmed
- 1 tbsp. butter
- 4 eggs
- Salt
- 4 tbsp. freshly grated parmigiano-reggiano

1. Bring a wide pot of salted water to a boil. Add asparagus and cook until just soft, about 4 minutes.

2. Meanwhile, melt butter in a large skillet over medium heat. Crack eggs into skillet, season to taste with salt, and fry until egg whites are set and yolks are runny, 3–5 minutes.

3. Divide eggs among four warm plates. Drain asparagus. Arrange one-quarter of the spears over each fried egg and sprinkle each with 1 tbsp. of the parmigiano-reggiano.

SAUTÉED ARTICHOKE BAKED WITH MOZZARELLA

(*Carciofi Saltati e Fusi al Forno con la Mozzarella*)

SERVES 4 – 6

ITALIAN COOK Marcella Hazan says: “Here is [another] excellent example of the principle of *insaporire* ... in action. Whenever I have demonstrated this dish, professional cooks in the audience were startled at how dark I allowed the artichokes to get. But it is only then, when they have deeply and confidently browned, that they develop flavor, *sapore*.”

- 1 2-lb. bag of baby artichokes, usually containing about 20 pieces, or 8 full-size artichokes

Juice of 1/2 lemon

2 tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil

4 whole cloves garlic, peeled

Fine sea salt and freshly ground black pepper

2 tbsp. butter

1/3 cup freshly grated parmigiano-reggiano cheese

8 oz. mozzarella, sliced thin, no thicker than 1/4"

1. Trim the artichokes, stripping them of all the tough inedible portions of their leaves. If you are working with baby artichokes, which we recommend, cut them lengthwise in half. If you are using the full-size ones, cut them into 4 pieces. As you trim each piece, drop it into a bowl of water acidulated with the lemon juice. (You can prepare the artichokes up to this point several hours in advance. When ready to proceed with the cooking, drain the artichokes and rinse them in cold water to wash off the lemon from their soak.)

2. Choose a skillet wide enough to contain the artichokes in a single uncrowded layer. Put in the olive oil and garlic and turn the heat on to medium-high. Cook the garlic to a light brown color, stirring from time to time. Remove the garlic from the pan, discard it, and put in the artichokes.

3. Cook the artichokes for 25 minutes or more, always at lively heat, until they are

completely tender. Turn them over frequently, letting them brown all over. If they stick to the pan, as it is likely and even desirable for them to do, add 2–3 tbsp. of water and loosen them from the bottom using a wooden spoon or spatula. When done, add salt and pepper, turn them over once or twice, and take them off the heat.

4. Turn on the oven to 400°. Use 1 tbsp. of the butter to smear the bottom of an oven-to-table baking dish, about 7" × 11" if rectangular, or its equivalent in other shapes. Spread the artichokes in the dish with any juices from the skillet. Sprinkle half the parmigiano-reggiano over them. Cover with the sliced mozzarella. Top with the remaining grated cheese and dot with the remaining butter, cut into small pieces.

5. When ready to eat, put the dish into the preheated oven and bake just until the mozzarella melts and becomes partly colored a light brown. Serve at once with crusty bread to sop up the delicious juices. Do not let the dish sit after baking, because as the mozzarella cools it contracts and becomes “stiff.”

GREEN OLIVES MARINATED WITH WILD FENNEL

MAKES 2 16-OZ. JARS

IN THE SMALL VILLAGES of southern Italy, “putting up” food may be a time-consuming task, but it’s a way of life—or as the locals would say, “It’s what we do.” From the town of Capolattaro, Italy, comes this recipe, adapted for American kitchens.

- 1/4 cup extra-virgin olive oil
- 5 long strips orange rind
- 6 sprigs wild or bulb fennel leaves
- 1 tbsp. fennel seeds
- 6 cloves garlic, peeled
- 2 small Italian-style red peppers, medium-hot
- 2 cups brine-cured green Italian olives, unpitted





1. Heat olive oil in a large sauté pan over medium heat. Add orange rind, fennel leaves, fennel seeds, garlic, and peppers, and cook over medium heat for about 4 minutes. Add olives and cook 1 minute longer.

2. Rinse two 16-oz. glass jars with tight-fitting lids in very hot water. Dry jar and lids thoroughly, then fill jars about four-fifths full with olive mixture. Cover olives completely with more olive oil, then cover jars loosely with lids and allow to cool to room temperature. Seal jars tightly and store in the refrigerator for at least 2 weeks before eating. Olives will keep for 2–3 months refrigerated.

TOMATOES STUFFED WITH RICE

(Pomodoro a Riso)

SERVES 4 – 8

STUFFED VEGETABLES appear on just about every antipasto table in Rome—including this spectacular dish, which we enjoyed at Casale on the via Flaminia in Rome, and which is where we found this recipe.

- 8 firm, ripe medium tomatoes
- 1/2 cup Italian risotto rice (preferably vialone nano)
- 2 tbsp. finely chopped parsley
- 2 tbsp. finely chopped basil
- 2 cloves garlic, peeled and minced
- 1/2 cup extra-virgin olive oil
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper

1. Position oven rack in top third of oven, then preheat oven to 400°. Pull stems off tomato tops, then trim about 3/4" from bottom of each one and set ends aside. Working over a medium bowl, use a small spoon to carefully scoop out inner pulp without puncturing the walls of the tomatoes. Arrange scooped-out tomatoes in a medium baking dish, and set aside.

2. Pass tomato pulp through a food mill or pulse in the bowl of a food processor to a chunky purée, then transfer back into bowl. Add risotto, parsley, basil,

garlic, and oil; liberally season with salt and pepper. Mix well.

3. Spoon filling into prepared tomatoes (there may be a little filling left over), and place a reserved tomato end on top of each stuffed tomato. Drizzle a little oil over tomatoes, and bake until rice is swollen and tender and tomatoes are soft and well browned, about 50 minutes. Remove from oven, and set aside to cool to room temperature.



SAFFRON-“SMOTHERED” CAULIFLOWER

(Cavolfiore Soffocato)

SERVES 6

FOOD HISTORIAN and SAVEUR contributor Clifford Wright serves this Sardinian dish as an accompaniment to lamb, then eats the leftovers as antipasto.

- 1 2-lb. head cauliflower, trimmed and cut into 6 wedges
- 1/4 cup extra-virgin olive oil
- Pinch of saffron threads crumbled in a mortar with 1/2 tsp. salt
- 10 imported green olives, pitted

1. Preheat the oven to 350°. Toss the cauliflower pieces with the olive oil in a large bowl. Toss again with the saffron.

2. Place the cauliflower in a large baking pan in a single layer. Sprinkle the olives around in the spaces between. Cover the pan tightly with aluminum foil so the steam can't escape, and bake until the cauliflower is tender, about 1 hour. Serve hot or at room temperature.

METHOD

Fennel with Butter and Parmigiano-Reggiano

*(Finocchio al Burro e
Parmigiano-Reggiano)*

SERVES 6

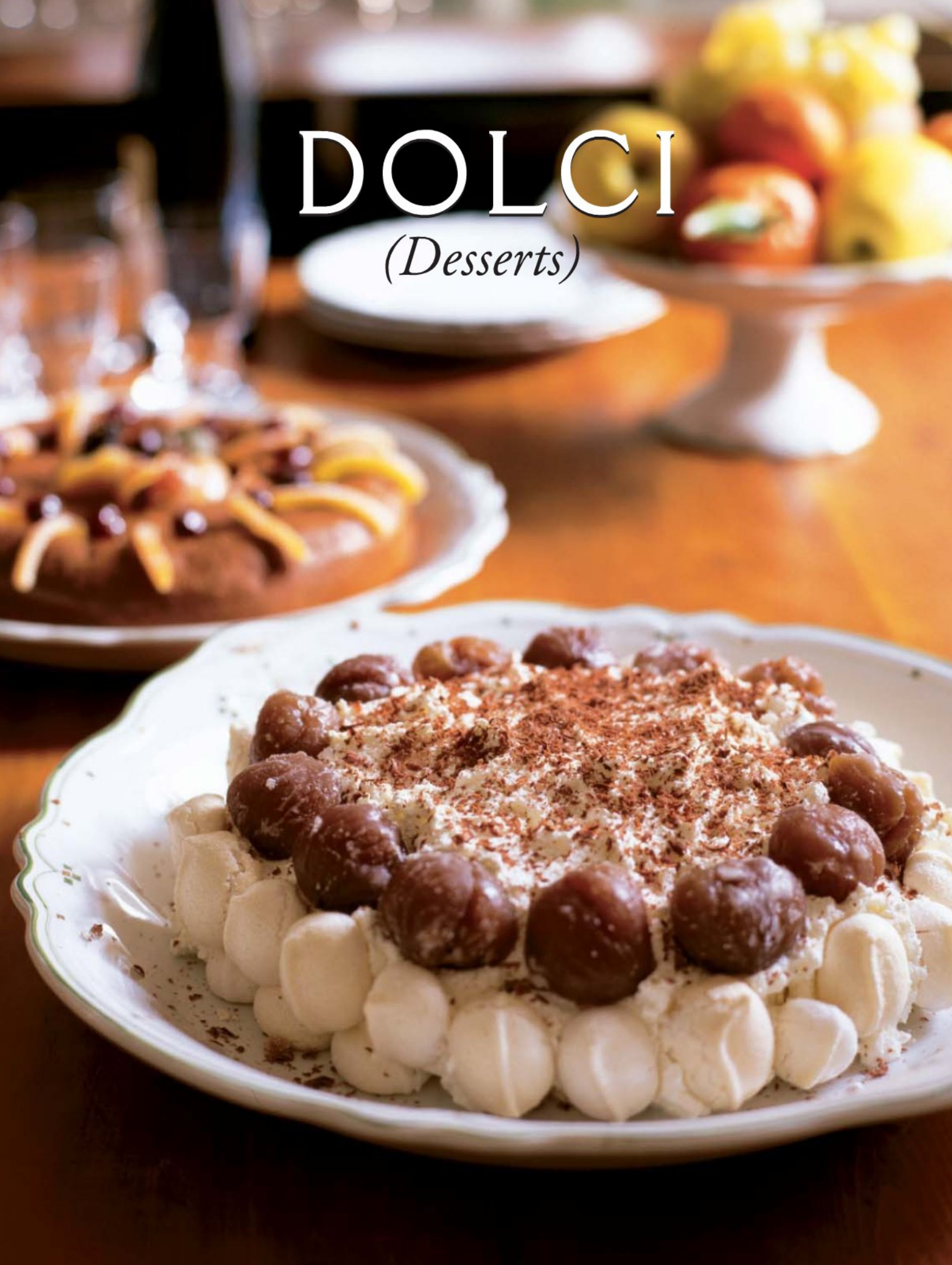
Fennel cooked in butter and served with parmigiano-reggiano is a classic Italian technique for preparing this aromatic vegetable.

Bring a large pot of salted water to a boil over high heat. Add 8 quartered, trimmed small fennel bulbs and cook until slightly softened, about 5 minutes, then drain. Heat 5 tbsp. butter in a large skillet over medium heat. Add fennel, season to taste with salt and freshly ground black pepper, and cook, turning fennel occasionally, until just tender, about 5 minutes. Transfer to a warm serving dish and sprinkle with 1/4 cup freshly grated parmigiano-reggiano.



DOLCI

(Desserts)



MERINGUES WITH MARRONS GLACÉS AND WHIPPED CREAM

(Meringata)

SERVES 10

THIS RECIPE CAME FROM Delfina Romanengo, owner of the well known Genoa confectionery of the same name. She makes this dessert at home using meringues and marrons glacés (candied chestnuts) from her shop.

20 marrons glacés (romanengo.com)
1 cup superfine sugar
1/8 tsp. ground cinnamon
2 egg whites, at room temperature
4 cups heavy cream, chilled
3 tbsp. confectioners' sugar
5 oz. bittersweet chocolate, shaved
with a swivel blade peeler (to
yield about 2 cups)

1. Preheat oven to 250°. Line a cookie sheet with parchment paper and set aside. Quarter 7 marrons glacés and set aside. Combine superfine sugar and cinnamon in a small bowl. Beat egg whites in the bowl of a standing mixer on medium-high speed until stiff peaks form. Reduce speed to low and gradually add sugar mixture, beating constantly. Increase speed to high and continue beating until meringue is thick and glossy and holds medium-stiff peaks, about 15 minutes.

2. Transfer meringue to a pastry bag fitted with a 1/2" plain pastry tip. Holding pastry tip perpendicular to parchment paper, pipe meringue into 40 1 1/4" mounds about 1/2" apart. Using a small knife, drag pointed meringue "tail" at top of each mound along middle to make a raised crease like the indented one on a peeled chestnut. Bake meringues until dry, 20–25 minutes. Set aside to let cool completely.

3. Whisk cream and confectioners' sugar together in a large bowl until stiff peaks form. Transfer whipped cream to a clean dry pastry bag fitted with a large plain pastry tip and pipe one-third of the cream into a 10" disk onto a large cake plate. Scatter

10 of the meringues, then half the quartered marrons glacés, then 3/4 cup of the chocolate, over cream, in that order, then cover with half the remaining whipped cream. Repeat layering once more, ending with remaining whipped cream. Decorate perimeter of cake with whole marrons glacés and sides of cake with remaining meringues. Sprinkle top with remaining chocolate. Serve immediately.



ITALIAN ICE

(Granita)

SERVES 4 – 6

IN SICILY, granitas and other frozen desserts are often served with or in brioche buns, but this recipe is so delicious it's delightful all on its own.

FOR COFFEE GRANITA:

2 cups (16 oz.) freshly brewed espresso,
at room temperature
1/2 cup sugar

FOR LEMON GRANITA:

1 1/2 cups fresh lemon juice (juice of 8–9
lemons)
1/2 cup sugar

1. FOR COFFEE GRANITA: Put espresso and sugar into a medium bowl and stir with a wooden spoon until sugar dissolves completely, about 3 minutes.

2. Pour coffee mixture into a medium baking dish and transfer to the freezer.

Using the tines of a fork, stir the mixture every 30 minutes, scraping edges and breaking up any chunks as the mixture freezes, until granita is slushy and frozen, about 4 hours.

3. FOR LEMON GRANITA: Put lemon juice, sugar, and 1 cup water into a medium bowl and stir with a wooden spoon until sugar dissolves completely, about 3 minutes.

4. Pour lemon juice mixture into a medium baking dish and transfer to the freezer. Using the tines of a fork, stir mixture every 30 minutes, scraping edges and breaking up any chunks as the mixture freezes, until granita is slushy and frozen, about 4 hours.

5. Divide granitas into individual serving glasses or transfer into plastic containers, cover, and freeze until ready to serve. Granitas will keep, frozen, up to 4 days.

VISTORTA CHOCOLATE CAKE

(Vistorta Torta di Cioccolato)

SERVES 6 – 8

WHILE VISITING the famed Brandolini family at their Vistorta wine estate in Friuli, they served us this dense cake—a family recipe.

13 tbsp. softened butter
3 tbsp. flour
6 oz. semisweet chocolate
3/4 cup sugar
6 eggs, separated
1 1/4 cups finely ground almonds
1 tbsp. brandy
2 pinches salt
Confectioners' sugar

1. Preheat oven to 375°. Butter an 11" springform pan with 1 tbsp. of the butter, line bottom with parchment paper; butter paper, then dust bottom and sides with flour. Melt chocolate in top of double boiler set above simmering water over medium heat. Set aside to cool.

2. Put remaining butter in a large bowl and beat with an electric mixer until fluffy. Gradually add sugar, beating for 2–3 minutes. Add egg yolks one at a time, beating well between each addition, then add chocolate, beating just enough to blend it in. Stir in almonds and brandy, then set aside.

3. Put egg whites and salt in a large clean bowl and beat with an electric mixer until they form medium-stiff peaks. Add one-third of the whites to the chocolate mixture and fold in with a rubber spatula, then carefully fold in remaining whites in two batches, taking care not to deflate the batter. Pour into prepared pan.

4. Put pan in oven and bake for 15 minutes, reduce heat to 350°, and continue baking until a skewer stuck into center of cake comes out clean, 30–40 minutes. Remove cake from oven and set aside to cool. Unmold, peel off parchment, and place, right side up, on a cake plate. Dust liberally with confectioners' sugar just before serving.

SPONGE CAKE WITH FANCY CREAM CANNOLI FILLING

(Bianco Mangiare Cake)

MAKES 1 CAKE

THIS IS OUR home-style version of a mouthwatering dessert created by the legendary Missouri Baking Co. of St. Louis, Missouri.

FOR THE CAKE:

7 tbsp. all-purpose flour
7 tbsp. cake flour
4 eggs
1 egg white
½ cup plus 2 tbsp. sugar
1 tsp. vanilla extract
¼ tsp. cream of tartar

FOR THE FILLING:

6 tbsp. confectioners' sugar
2½ cups ricotta
¼ tsp. ground cinnamon
⅓ cup candied fruits, chopped



1½ oz. semisweet chocolate, finely chopped

FOR THE GANACHE:

1 cup heavy cream
3 oz. milk chocolate, chopped
5 oz. bittersweet chocolate, chopped
½ cup toasted almonds, chopped

1. FOR THE CAKE: Preheat oven to 425°. Butter an 8" round cake pan and line the bottom with buttered parchment paper. Sift flours together into a small bowl and set aside. Put 1 whole egg and yolks of 3 eggs in the bowl of a standing mixer, reserving whites in a separate mixing bowl along with 1 egg white. Add sugar and vanilla to yolks and beat at medium speed until pale and fluffy, about 8 minutes. Set aside.

2. Put egg whites in the clean bowl of a standing mixer and whisk on medium-low

speed until frothy, about 2 minutes. Add cream of tartar, increase speed to medium-high, and continue whisking until stiff peaks form, 2–3 minutes. Carefully fold one-third of the whites into yolk mixture with a rubber spatula, then fold in remaining whites. Sift about a quarter of the flour over egg mixture, then gently fold it in. Continue to sift and fold until flour is incorporated. Pour into prepared pan and place in oven. Lower heat to 325° and bake until golden, about 30 minutes. Cool in pan for 5 minutes, then unmold, peel off parchment paper, and cool on a rack.

3. FOR THE FILLING: Put sugar, ricotta, and cinnamon in the bowl of a food processor and purée until smooth. Transfer to a bowl and refrigerate for 2 hours. Fold in candied fruits and chocolate, then refrigerate.

4. FOR THE GANACHE: Heat cream in a medium saucepan and bring to a boil over medium heat. Remove from heat, add milk and bittersweet chocolates, and let sit for 1 minute. Whisk until smooth and set aside until thick enough to spread.

5. TO ASSEMBLE: Split cooled cake into 2 layers. Place bottom layer on a cake plate, then spread with half the filling. Place second layer on filling and frost sides with ganache. Spread top with remaining filling and press almonds into sides of cake.

FANCY SPUMONI WITH BALSAMIC SYRUP

SERVES 6 – 8

IF YOU CAN'T FIND tiny Amarettini di Saronno cookies for the garnish, use crushed regular-size amaretti (Italian macaroons) instead.

1 pint chocolate ice cream
1 pint pistachio ice cream
1 pint strawberry ice cream
5 egg whites
1/2 cup sugar
1 tbsp. balsamic vinegar
1 cup Amarettini di Saronno
(miniature almond cookies)
6–8 tsp. candied fruit
6–8 sprigs fresh mint

1. Allow chocolate ice cream to soften at room temperature, about 20 minutes, then pack well into the bottom of a 3 1/2"-tall x 7"-diameter soufflé dish in an even layer. Freeze until solid, 30–45 minutes. Repeat process with pistachio, then strawberry, ice cream, making 3 distinct layers.

2. Beat egg whites in a bowl with an electric mixer on medium speed until soft peaks form, 1–2 minutes. Increase speed to high and gradually add 1/4 cup of the sugar, beating until shiny, stiff peaks form, 1–2 minutes. Spread meringue over ice cream. Freeze until firm, 1–2 hours.

METHOD

Zabaglione

At lunch, Rocco—a Manhattan Italian restaurant opened in 1922—serves its zabaglione chilled, with a strawberry at the bottom of the glass.

Bring a medium pot with about 2" water to a simmer over medium heat. Meanwhile, warm 1/4 cup marsala in a small pot over medium-low heat. Whisk together 4 egg yolks and 1/4 cup sugar in a large nonreactive metal bowl until thick and pale yellow, about 2 minutes. Set bowl over pot of simmering water, reduce heat to medium-low, and gradually add marsala while whisking constantly. Continue whisking vigorously until mixture is light and foamy, almost tripling in volume and holding soft peaks, about 10 minutes. (Do not let egg cook around edges of the bowl.) Spoon into four long-stemmed glasses. Serve chilled or warm. Serves 4.



3. Put 2 tbsp. water and remaining sugar into a small pan and heat over medium heat, stirring, until sugar dissolves, about 2 minutes. Stir in vinegar, remove from heat, and set aside to cool.

4. Divide spumoni among six or eight wide dessert dishes, depending on the number of diners. Scatter cookies around spumoni, crushing some with your hand. Drizzle vinegar syrup over spumoni and garnish each with candied fruit and mint.

BUTTERMILK PANNA COTTA

SERVES 6

THIS RECIPE IS adapted from one in Claudia Fleming's *The Last Course* (Random House, 2001). *Panna cotta* means cooked cream.

1 1/2 tsp. unflavored gelatin
1 1/4 cups heavy cream
7 tbsp. sugar
1/2 vanilla pod, split lengthwise
1 3/4 cups buttermilk

1. Soften gelatin in 1 tbsp. cold water in a medium bowl for about 5 minutes. Meanwhile, put cream and sugar into a small saucepan. Scrape seeds from vanilla pod into pan, then add pod. Heat cream over medium heat, stirring until sugar dissolves, 3–5 minutes, then stir into bowl with gelatin. Stir in buttermilk, then strain into another bowl.

2. Divide custard among six 8-oz. ramekins and refrigerate until set, about 3 hours. To unmold, dip ramekins into a dish of hot water, then invert custards onto plates. Garnish with raspberries or other fruit, if you like.

CREAM GELATO WITH WHITE TRUFFLES

(Gelato di Crema all' Tartufo Bianco)

SERVES 4

THIS RICH ITALIAN ice cream from Manhattan's famed San Pietro restaurant is good even without the truffles.

4 cups heavy cream
4 egg yolks
5 tbsp. sugar
1 tsp. vanilla extract
1 oz. white truffles (urbanitruffles.com; 800/281-2330)
1 tsp. high-quality truffle oil (urbanitruffles.com; 800/281-2330)

1. Bring cream to a simmer in a medium heavy-bottomed saucepan over medium

heat. Meanwhile, put egg yolks and sugar in a medium mixing bowl and whisk until thick, smooth, and pale yellow, about 5 minutes.

2. Slowly pour 1 cup of the hot cream into the yolk mixture, whisking constantly; then gradually add mixture back into the hot cream in the saucepan, stirring with a wooden spoon. Reduce heat to low and cook, stirring constantly, until custard is thick enough to coat the back of the spoon, about 10 minutes. Do not allow custard to boil (it will curdle).

3. Strain custard through a sieve into a medium bowl. Set aside to cool, then cover and refrigerate for at least 4 hours.

4. Shave truffle and set aside a little more than half. Add vanilla to cold custard, then pour into an ice cream maker and process according to manufacturer's directions, adding truffle oil and shavings a few minutes before churning is completed. Serve gelato with a few shavings of remaining truffle over the top, if you like.

TIRAMISÙ

SERVES 4

APPARENTLY INVENTED not in Venice itself but in the Veneto, at the Treviso branch of El Toulà—a hotel restaurant noted for its good cooking—this simple dessert has become so famous in America that it seems to appear on every menu in the land. The word literally means “pick-me-up”—perhaps a reference to its caffeine content.

2 eggs, separated
 1/2 cup sugar
 1/2 cup mascarpone
 1 cup strong fresh black coffee (not espresso)
 12 good-quality Italian savoiardi cookies or ladyfingers
 Cocoa powder

1. Beat egg yolks with a whisk in a medium bowl. Gradually add sugar, continuing

to whisk until mixture is thick, smooth, and pale yellow. Gently fold mascarpone into mixture with a rubber spatula; set aside.

2. Put egg whites in a clean, dry mixing bowl and beat with a whisk until stiff, but not dry, peaks form. Fold egg whites into mascarpone mixture and set aside.

3. Pour coffee into a wide, shallow bowl. Dip 4 of the savoiardi or ladyfingers into the coffee just long enough to moisten them without making them soggy, then arrange them side by side in a single layer on a serving platter.

4. Spread one-third of the mascarpone mixture over the biscuits, then dust with a little cocoa powder. Repeat the entire process, including coffee, layering remaining savoiardi or ladyfingers, mascarpone, and cocoa. Refrigerate until well chilled, then serve.



QUINCE PASTE (Cotognata)

MAKES 1 5" × 9" LOAF

THIS DELICIOUS RECIPE comes from the famed Romanengo confectionery in Genoa, which sells it as a teatime snack or a simple, light dessert. Quince paste must cure for 20 days before serving.

2 lemons, halved
 2 lbs. (about 5 medium) ripe quince
 5 cups sugar
 1 1/2 tsp. dry pectin

1. Squeeze 2 tsp. of juice from 1 of the lemon halves into a small bowl and set aside.

Peel, core, and quarter quince, rubbing them all over with juice from lemons to prevent fruit from browning. Put quince into a large pot and add just enough water to cover (about 5 cups). Simmer over medium-low heat until quince are soft and easily pierced with a fork, about 1 hour.

2. Drain quince and purée in a food processor until smooth. Transfer to a clean large heavy pot and stir in 4 1/2 cups of the sugar and reserved lemon juice. Bring to a boil, reduce heat to medium-low, and simmer until purée is deep red, glossy, and thick, about 1 hour. Remove pot from heat and stir in pectin.

3. Line a 5" × 9" or 5-cup loaf pan with parchment paper. Pour quince mixture into pan, smoothing out top, and set aside to let cool. Loosely cover pan with parchment paper. Set quince paste aside in a cool dark dry place to let cure and dry for 10 days.

4. Unmold paste and loosely wrap in parchment paper. Set paste aside, bottom side up, to let cure and dry until texture is firm to the touch and paste slices easily, about 10 days more. Dust quince paste all over with remaining sugar.

STUFFED HORSESHOE-SHAPED PASTRY (Presnitz)

MAKES 2

WE ADAPTED this recipe for presnitz, a beloved pastry in Friuli-Venezia Giulia, from Pasticceria Caffè Pirona in Trieste.

1 1/2 cups raisins
 1 cup sugar
 2 tbsp. unsalted butter, softened
 1 tsp. honey
 6 cups shelled walnuts, chopped
 2 cups crumbled sponge cake
 3/4 cup candied orange peel, chopped
 6 eggs
 1 lb. frozen puff pastry, thawed
 Flour

1. Preheat oven to 365°. Line two baking sheets with parchment paper and set aside. Chop 1 cup of the raisins and set aside.

2. Put sugar, butter, and honey into the bowl of a standing mixer and beat with the paddle attachment on medium-high speed until light and fluffy, about 1 minute. Add walnuts, sponge cake, candied orange peel, the reserved chopped raisins, and the remaining whole raisins and beat on medium speed until well combined, about 1 minute.

3. Add 5 of the eggs, 1 egg at a time, thoroughly beating after each addition. Increase speed to high and beat until thick and mixture has the texture of a chunky paste, 2–3 minutes. Set aside.

4. Cut puff pastry in half lengthwise, roll each sheet out on a lightly floured surface to 18" × 8" rectangles, then transfer each to a prepared baking sheet. Position one of the long sides of pastry close to you. Spread half the filling on lowest third of pastry, leaving a 1" border on each end. Carefully roll pastry around filling jelly-roll style and pinch ends to seal. Turn pastry seam side down, then draw ends toward each other to create a horseshoe shape. Repeat process with remaining pastry and filling.

5. Beat the remaining egg with 1 tsp. water in a small bowl and brush each pastry with some of the egg wash. Bake until pastries are golden brown, 30–40 minutes. Set aside to cool completely. Presnitz will keep in an airtight container for up to 1 week.

ALMOND PINE NUT COOKIES

(Pignoli)

MAKES ABOUT 2 DOZEN

PIGNOLI ARE THE SOFTER, pine nut-topped cousins of amaretti, which have no topping and are crisp. This recipe is a scaled-down adaptation of the one used at Scialo Bros. Bakery in Federal Hill, Rhode Island.

12 oz. (1¼ cups) almond paste
3 egg whites, lightly beaten
1 cup confectioners' sugar
¾ cup pine nuts

1. Position oven racks in the upper and lower thirds of the oven, then preheat oven to 300°. Line two cookie sheets with parchment paper and set aside.

2. Beat almond paste in a large mixing bowl with an electric mixer on medium speed until paste loosens up a bit, about 1 minute. Add half the egg whites and beat until smooth, about 1 minute. Reduce speed to low, then gradually sift in sugar while beating constantly and scraping sides of bowl with rubber spatula as needed, until sugar is fully incorporated and mixture is smooth,

about 2 minutes. Add the remaining egg whites and beat until batter is smooth and thick, about 1 minute.

3. Transfer batter to a large pastry bag fitted with a ½" plain pastry tip and pipe 1½" rounds (or spoon batter by the heaping tablespoonful), about 1" apart, onto prepared cookie sheets. Sprinkle each with 1 tsp. pine nuts.

4. Transfer to oven and bake until cookies are puffed and lightly golden, 25–30 minutes, rotating cookie sheets from top to bottom rack halfway through. Remove cookies from oven and set aside on cooling racks to cool completely before peeling off parchment paper. Store in airtight containers for up to 2 weeks.



PRATO-STYLE COOKIES

(Biscotti di Prato)

MAKES ABOUT 4 DOZEN

THESE TUSCAN COOKIES are one of the few utterly traditional Italian specialties at the Florence trattoria Garga.

- 3½ cups flour
- 2½ cups sugar
- 3 whole eggs
- 1 egg yolk
- 1 tsp. baking powder
- ½ tsp. salt
- 2 pinches saffron threads
- 1 cup shelled almonds, toasted

1. Preheat oven to 325°. Line a large baking sheet with parchment paper and set aside.

2. Put flour on a clean surface, shape into a mound with your hands, then make a well in the center. Add sugar, 2 of the whole eggs, egg yolk, baking powder, salt, saffron, and 3 tbsp. water to well and beat together with your fingers or a fork. Continue beating, gradually incorporating flour from inside edge of well, until dough comes together (dough will be stiff).

3. Add almonds and knead with both hands until dough is smooth, 1–2 minutes. Quarter dough, roll into 1½" × 10" logs, and arrange on prepared baking sheet 2" apart.

4. Beat the remaining whole egg in a small bowl, then brush dough logs with some of it. Transfer dough logs to oven and bake until golden brown on top, about 45 minutes. Remove baking sheet from oven and use a long metal spatula to transfer dough logs to a cutting board. Carefully cut logs crosswise with a serrated knife (logs will be a bit fragile) into ½"-thick cookies.

5. Return cookies to baking sheet and arrange, cut side up, in a single layer. Bake cookies until pale brown, 20–25 minutes. Set cookies aside to cool completely before serving. Cookies will keep for up to 1 month in an airtight container.



CRUMBLY ALMOND CAKE

(Sbrisolona)

SERVES 6 – 8

THIS CAKE'S NAME is based on the Italian word *sbriciolare*, "to crumble," and is a specialty of Mantua, in Lombardy. Stored in an airtight container, it will keep for a week.

- 3 cups "00" flour (cortibros.biz, 800/509-3663) or pastry flour
- 1 cup yellow cornmeal
- 1 egg, lightly beaten
- 18 tbsp. (9 oz.) cold butter, cut into small pieces
- 1¼ cups sugar
- 1 tsp. salt
- 1 tsp. finely grated lemon zest
- 1¾ cups blanched whole almonds, coarsely chopped
- ⅓ cup shelled almonds

1. Preheat oven to 350°. Sift flour and cornmeal together onto a smooth work surface. Shape mixture into a mound and make a well in the center. Put egg, butter, sugar, salt, and lemon zest into the well, then, using your hands and fingers, quickly work in flour mixture until dough is just combined and still crumbly. Gently mix in chopped almonds.

2. Sprinkle dough onto a 10¼" × 15" jelly roll pan in an even layer about 1" deep (refrain from packing dough down). Scatter whole almonds on top. Bake until golden brown, 25–30 minutes. Transfer pan to a wire rack to let cake cool. Break into pieces before serving.

SEMOLINA CAKE WITH CANDIED FRUITS

(Budino di Semolino con Canditi)

SERVES 12

STUDED WITH candied fruits, this coffee cake symbolizes Genoa's past, when both local and imported fruits were dried and preserved in syrup, then baked in dry breads for increased durability on maritime journeys. Contact Formaggio Kitchen (formaggio-kitchen.com; 888/212-3224) for a complete selection of candied fruits.

- ¼ cup golden raisins
- ¼ cup port
- 3 tbsp. butter
- 4 tbsp. fine dry bread crumbs
- 3½ cups milk
- 1 cup semolina
- 4 eggs, separated
- ½ cup sugar
- 7 oz. assorted candied fruits, such as apricots, orange peel, peaches, and prunes, pitted and diced
- 1 tsp. finely grated lemon zest
- 1 tbsp. pine nuts
- 1 oz. candied orange peel strips
- 2 oz. candied cherries

1. Macerate raisins in port for 4–8 hours. Grease a 10-cup tube pan with 1 tbsp. of the butter, dust with bread crumbs, and set aside.

2. Bring milk and remaining butter to a boil in a heavy medium pot over medium





heat. Gradually add semolina, stirring constantly with a wooden spoon. Reduce heat to low and slowly cook semolina, stirring occasionally, until mixture pulls away from bottom of pot, forming a rough ball, and is slightly moist to the touch, 1 hour. Transfer to a large bowl and let cool. Meanwhile, preheat oven to 350°.

3. Put egg yolks and sugar into a medium bowl, beat with an electric mixer on high speed until pale yellow, 2–3 minutes, then stir into cooled semolina. Add raisins and port, assorted candied fruits, lemon zest, and pine nuts and stir well. Beat egg whites in another medium bowl on medium-high speed until soft peaks form, about 2 minutes, then fold into batter. Evenly spread batter in the prepared pan.

4. Bake cake until it is golden brown and a wooden skewer inserted in center comes out clean, 75–90 minutes. Immediately unmold cake onto a cooling rack. Decorate top of cake with candied orange peel and cherries. Serve warm or at room temperature with wedges of candied orange, if you like.

RICOTTA FRITTERS

MAKES ABOUT 35 2" FRITTERS

THESE SURPRISINGLY light fritters are best when made with fresh ricotta. If only commercial ricotta is available, drain off any excess moisture before proceeding.

3 eggs, lightly beaten
2 tbsp. sugar
1 lb. ricotta
1 cup flour
4 tsp. baking powder
5 tbsp. brandy
2 tsp. finely chopped lemon zest
Pinch of salt
Vegetable oil
Confectioners' sugar

1. Combine eggs, sugar, ricotta, flour, baking powder, brandy, lemon zest, and salt in a medium bowl. Mix well, cover, and refrigerate for 1 hour.

2. Pour oil into a large saucepan to a depth of 3" and heat over medium-high heat. Drop rounded teaspoonfuls of batter into hot oil and fry, a few at a time, until golden, about

5 minutes. Drain on paper towels, dust with confectioners' sugar, and serve.

OLIVE OIL CAKE

(Pissota con l'Olio)

MAKES 1 9" CAKE

THIS DENSE CAKE, a signature dessert at Dalla Rosa Alda in Italy's Valpolicella region, is made with local olive oil and flavored with a house liqueur whose ingredients are secret; the restaurant recommends substituting Grand Marnier.

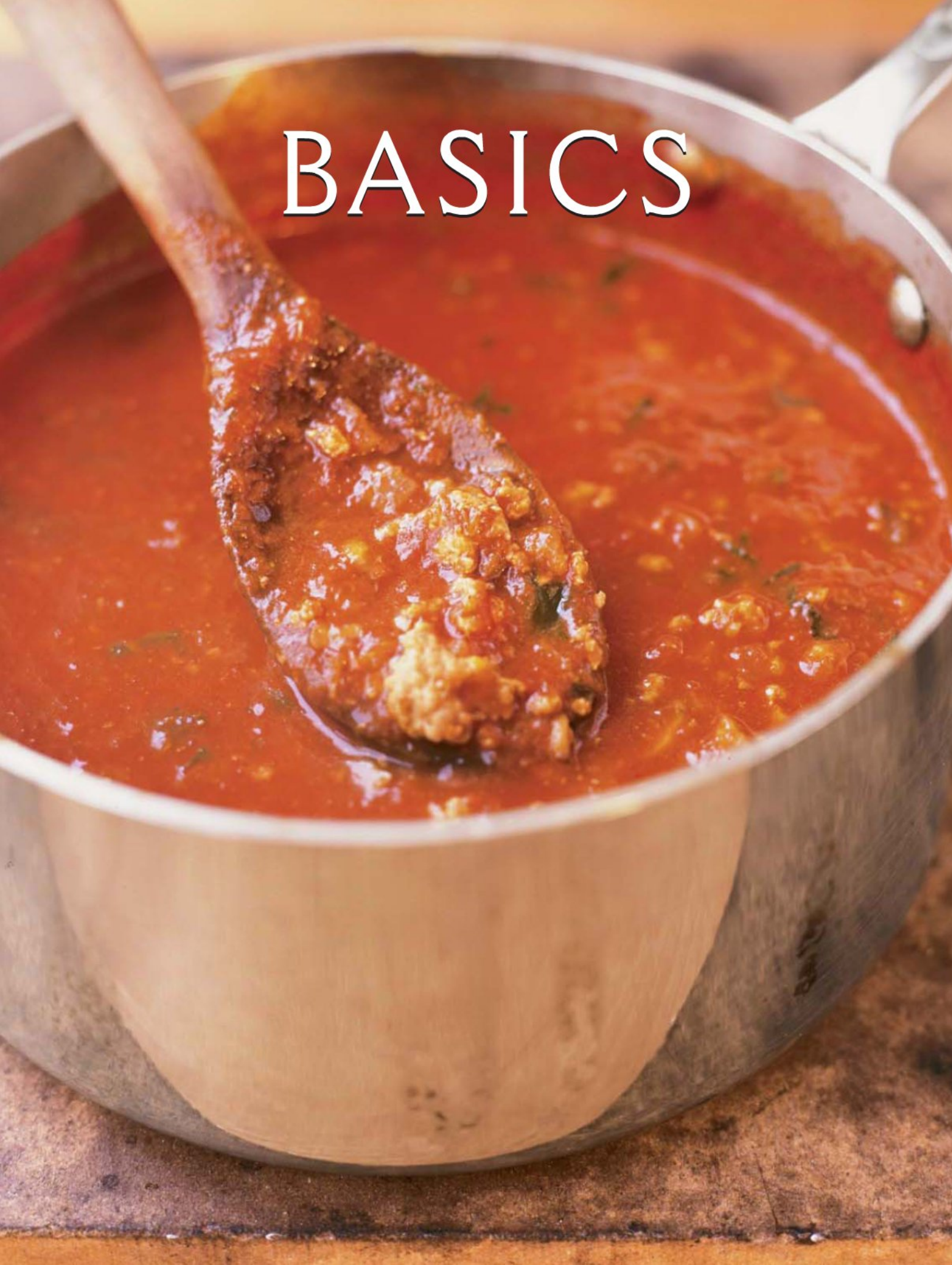
1 tbsp. butter
3 cups plus 2 tbsp. flour
4 eggs
1 cup sugar
1/4 tsp. lemon zest
3/4 cup quality extra-virgin olive oil
2/3 cup milk
3 tbsp. Grand Marnier or other
sweet citrus-flavored liqueur
2 tbsp. baking powder

1. Preheat oven to 325°. Grease a 3"-deep round 9" cake pan and the outside of a heavy 3"-deep 3" ovenproof ramekin or bowl with butter, then dust with 2 tbsp. of the flour, tapping out excess. Put ramekin or bowl upside down in center of prepared pan. Alternatively, grease an 11-cup bundt pan with butter and dust with flour. Set prepared pan aside.

2. Beat eggs and sugar together in a large mixing bowl with an electric mixer on medium-high speed until pale yellow, about 1 minute. Add remaining flour, lemon zest, oil, milk, and liqueur and stir with a wooden spoon until well combined. Add baking powder and stir until thoroughly combined.

3. Holding ramekin or bowl firmly in place, spoon batter into prepared pan around ramekin or bowl (or bundt pan, if using), and smooth out top with the back of the spoon. Bake until cake is deep golden brown and a wooden skewer inserted in center comes out clean, about 40 minutes. Transfer cake to a wire rack to let cool completely, in its pan.

BASICS



SICILIAN TOMATO-MEAT SAUCE

(*Sarsa 'i Picchi-Pacchiu e Carni*)

MAKES ABOUT 7 CUPS

THIS SAUCE IS MORE delicate than the familiar bolognese sauce—use it to make the Sicilian Rice Timbale (see recipe, page 49), or simply serve it on your favorite pasta.

- 2 28-oz. cans Italian plum tomatoes
- 3 tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 small yellow onion, peeled and minced
- 1/4 lb. cremini or other white mushrooms, coarsely chopped
- 3/4 lb. ground veal
- 1/4 lb. ground pork
- 2 tbsp. tomato paste
- 1 tbsp. sugar
- Pinch freshly grated nutmeg
- 1/4 cup loosely packed fresh basil, chopped
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper

1. Purée tomatoes in a food mill set over a large bowl. Scrape pulp into bowl, then discard seeds. Set tomatoes aside. Heat oil in a large heavy-bottomed pot over medium-low heat. Add onions and cook, stirring frequently, until soft, about 20 minutes. Increase heat to medium-high, stir in mushrooms, and cook for 5 minutes. Add veal and pork, breaking up lumps with a wooden spoon, and brown for 8 minutes.

2. Combine tomato paste with 2/3 cup water in a small bowl. Reduce heat to medium, then add tomato paste mixture to sauce and cook, stirring, for 1 minute. Stir in sugar, nutmeg, basil, and reserved tomatoes. Reduce heat to medium-low, season with salt and pepper to taste, and gently simmer, uncovered, stirring frequently, for 40 minutes. Adjust seasoning. To store sauce, cool to room temperature, then store, covered, in the refrigerator for up to 1 week, or frozen for up to 1 year.

METHOD

Raw Tomato-Caper Sauce

Makes 3–4 cups

Those tiny capers called nonpareilles are too subtle for this multipurpose Italian-style sauce. Look instead for large salt-packed capers from Pantelleria. NOTE: Sauce becomes saltier if left overnight.

Soak 1/2 cup capers in water for 15 minutes, changing water once or twice. Rinse well, roughly chop, and place in a large bowl. Add 3 coarsely chopped large fresh tomatoes, 2 crushed peeled garlic cloves, 3 minced anchovy filets, and 1/2 cup extra-virgin olive oil. Mix together and season to taste with freshly ground black pepper. Let stand for at least 1 hour to allow flavors to develop. Discard garlic. If desired, add roughly chopped fresh parsley or basil. Serve on hot pasta, toasted Italian bread, grilled fish, or vegetables.



MARINARA SAUCE

MAKES ABOUT 5 CUPS

THIS IS A VERSION of the sauce Rao's Restaurant in New York now sells nationwide.

- 2 28-oz. cans san marzano tomatoes
- 1/4 cup extra-virgin olive oil
- 2 oz. fatback or salt pork, diced (optional)
- 1 small yellow onion, peeled and minced
- 2 cloves garlic, peeled and minced
- Salt
- 6–10 fresh basil leaves, torn
- Pinch dried oregano
- Freshly ground black pepper

1. Drain tomatoes, reserving juice. Crush tomatoes with your hands into a bowl, gently removing and discarding any hard cores, skin, or tough membranes from stem ends. Set aside.

2. Heat oil in a large nonreactive saucepan over medium-low heat. If using fatback, add it to the pan and sauté until all fat has been rendered, about 5 minutes. Remove fatback with a slotted spoon and discard.

3. Add onions to pan and cook until golden, about 10 minutes. Add garlic and sauté until soft, about 3 minutes. Stir in tomatoes and reserved juice and season to taste with salt. Increase heat to high, and bring sauce to a boil. Immediately reduce heat to low and simmer until flavors have blended and sauce has slightly thickened, about 1 hour.

4. Stir in basil and oregano, and season to taste with salt and pepper. If not using immediately, refrigerate, covered, for up to a week.

CANNED CRUSHED TOMATOES

MAKES 6 QUARTS

ANY RIPE TOMATOES may be canned with this basic technique, but for the sweetest results, use local plum tomatoes at peak ripeness.

- 20 lbs. ripe plum tomatoes, washed and halved lengthwise
- Leaves from 1 bunch basil

1. Put tomatoes into a large heavy nonreactive pot and simmer over medium heat, stirring often, until tomatoes soften and release their juices and their skins fall off, 45–60 minutes. Working in batches, pass tomatoes and their juices through a food mill into another large heavy pot, discarding seeds and skins. Bring liquidy tomato pulp to a boil over high heat, reduce heat to medium, and simmer, stirring occasionally, until reduced by half and thickened a bit, about 3 hours.

2. Meanwhile, place canning rack in bottom of canning pot, add six 1-quart canning jars, and fill with water to cover jars by 3". Bring water to a boil over high heat, add jars' ring bands and lids, and sterilize equipment for at least 10 minutes. Dip canning tongs into boiling water in pot for 30 seconds to sterilize, then use to remove equipment, pouring water out of jars, and transfer to a clean dish towel.

3. Put about 8 basil leaves into each jar and fill to within 1" of top with hot tomatoes. Wipe rims with a hot damp clean dish towel, place lids on jars, then screw on ring bands. Transfer jars to canning rack and lower into canning pot of hot water (water should cover jars by at least 2"). Cover pot, return to a boil over medium-high heat, and process jars for 10 minutes. Remove jars from pot and set aside, at least 1" apart, until completely cool. Store for up to a year in a cool, dark place.

BOLOGNESE MEAT SAUCE

(Ragù alla Bolognese)

MAKES ABOUT 5 CUPS

THIS RECIPE IS from the Simili sisters of Bologna. They make a delicate brodo di carne, or meat broth, for use in their sauce because it doesn't need a lot of additional flavor, but any light broth will do.

- 1/4 cup extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 small yellow onion, peeled and minced
- 1 rib celery, trimmed and minced
- 1/2 medium carrot, peeled, trimmed, and minced
- 2-3 slices prosciutto di Parma (about 1 oz.), finely chopped
- 2 chicken livers, finely chopped
- 1 1/2 lbs. ground chuck
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 1/2 cup dry white wine
- 1 cup hot milk
- 1 cup beef, veal, or chicken broth
- 1 28-oz. can Italian plum tomato purée

METHOD

Oven-Roasted Tomatoes

Serves 4

These slow-roasted canned san marzanos are wonderful by themselves, mixed into cold (or hot) pasta, served on grilled or toasted bread as antipasto, interleaved with fried eggplant slices, or as a pizza topping.

Preheat oven to 275°. Pour 1/4 cup extra-virgin olive oil into a large nonreactive baking pan. Add 1 chopped peeled small yellow onion, 2 thinly sliced peeled cloves garlic, 1 tbsp. fresh rosemary leaves, and 3 tbsp. fresh parsley. Toss, then spread evenly on bottom of pan. Drain 2 28-oz. cans peeled whole san marzano tomatoes. Gently squeeze tomatoes to release excess juices, then place in pan in a single layer. Drizzle with an additional 1/4 cup extra-virgin olive oil. Sprinkle with 1 tsp. sugar and season to taste with salt and freshly ground black pepper. Place in oven and bake for 3 hours.

1. Heat oil in a large heavy-bottomed pot over medium heat. Add onions and cook, stirring frequently with a wooden spoon, until soft and translucent but not browned, about 3 minutes. Add celery and carrots and cook, stirring frequently, for 3 minutes more. Add prosciutto and chicken livers and cook, stirring, until livers are just cooked and still a little pink, about 1 minute. Add ground chuck, season to taste with salt and pepper, and cook, breaking up meat with the back of the spoon, until just cooked and still a little pink, about 5 minutes more. (To keep meat tender, do not fry or brown.)

2. Add wine to pot and cook, stirring, until it has evaporated, about 3 minutes. Reduce heat to medium-low, add hot milk, and cook, stirring occasionally, until milk has evaporated, about 10 minutes.

3. Meanwhile, heat broth and tomato purée in a medium saucepan over medium-high heat until hot, then add to meat mixture in pot. Reduce heat to low and gently simmer, stirring occasionally, for 2 1/2 hours. Season to taste with salt and pepper.

PESTO

(Pisto Kastarnoësa)

MAKES 1 1/2 CUPS

THIS MIXED-HERB PESTO comes from Castelnovo Magra, near La Spezia in eastern Liguria.

- 1/4 cup walnuts
- 1 clove garlic, peeled and coarsely chopped
- Pinch of coarse salt
- 2 tightly packed cups small basil leaves, washed and dried
- 1 tightly packed cup Italian parsley leaves
- 1 tbsp. fresh marjoram leaves
- 1/2 cup grated pecorino sardo or parmigiano-reggiano
- 6 tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil

1. With a mortar and pestle or food processor, make a paste of walnuts, garlic, and salt.

2. Add basil leaves, a little at a time, grinding to a smooth paste. Gradually add parsley leaves, marjoram leaves, pecorino sardo or parmigiano-reggiano, and olive oil. Use with your favorite pasta.

GENOESE MUSHROOM SAUCE

(Sugo ai Funghi)

MAKES 4 CUPS

THIS RICH AND HEARTY sauce was shared with us by SAVEUR contributor and grocer extraordinaire Darrell Corti, whose maternal grandmother, Pierina Bianchi, used to make this sauce.

- 4 tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil
- 2 medium yellow onions, peeled and minced
- 2 carrots, peeled and minced
- 3 ribs celery, minced
- 6-8 cloves garlic, peeled and minced
- 1 bunch parsley, minced
- 1/2 tsp. minced fresh rosemary
- 1/4 tsp. minced fresh thyme



1/4 tsp. minced fresh marjoram
 1 oz. dried porcini, soaked in 2 cups warm water
 1/2 cup dry red wine
 2 8-oz. cans tomato sauce
 1 beef bouillon cube
 1 bay leaf
 Freshly ground black pepper

1. Heat oil in a medium heavy pot over medium heat, add onions, and cook, stirring occasionally, until deep golden in color, 30–40 minutes. Add carrots, cook for 5–6 minutes, then add celery and cook until soft, about 10 minutes. Add garlic, parsley, rosemary, thyme, and marjoram and cook 4–5 minutes more.

2. Remove porcini from soaking liquid, finely chop, and add to pot; reserve soaking liquid. Push vegetables to one side of pot, increase heat to high, add wine to other side, and cook 2–3 minutes.

3. Reduce heat to low; stir in tomato sauce, 1 1/2 cups of the soaking liquid, bouillon cube, bay leaf, and pepper to taste. Cover and simmer, stirring occasionally, for 1 1/2 hours. Discard bay leaf.

4. Toss sauce with meat-filled ravioli or other pasta, or spoon over polenta.

VEAL PASTA SAUCE WITH RED, GREEN, AND YELLOW PEPPERS

*(Ragù di Vitello col Sughetto di
Peperoni Rossi, Verdi, e Gialli)*

SERVES 6

THIS SAUCE WAS GIVEN TO US BY author Marcella Hazan, who noted, “The veal is cooked separately and combined later with the peppers to preserve its juiciness.”

6 meaty bell peppers, 2 red, 2 green, and 2 yellow
 1/4 cup extra-virgin olive oil
 6 or 7 whole cloves garlic, peeled
 Fine sea salt
 4 fresh, ripe, firm plum tomatoes
 2 tbsp. vegetable oil



2 tbsp. butter
 1/2 cup very finely chopped onion
 1/2 lb. ground veal
 Freshly ground black pepper
 1/4 cup freshly grated parmigiano-reggiano

1. Cut each pepper lengthwise along the creases, remove the stem, seeds, and pithy core, then peel with a swivel-blade vegetable peeler. Cut the peppers into strips slightly less than 1" wide.

2. Pour the olive oil into a 12" skillet, preferably nonstick. Add the garlic, turn the heat on to medium-high, and cook, turning garlic from time to time, until it becomes colored a light nut brown. Remove from the pan and discard.

3. Add the peppers with a pinch or two of salt and turn the heat down to medium. Cook the peppers, turning them over from time to time, until they are quite tender. It should take about 45 minutes, and they will be wilted and considerably diminished in bulk.

4. While the peppers are cooking you can move forward with other steps of the sauce. Skin the tomatoes using the swivel-blade vegetable peeler. (Don't skin them by scalding them in hot water, because you want them to be very firm.) Chop them coarsely.

5. Pour the vegetable oil into a 10" skillet and add the butter and onions. Turn the heat on to medium-high and cook the onions, stirring from time to time, until they become colored a pale gold.

6. Add the veal with some salt and liberal grindings of pepper and turn the heat down to medium. Cook the meat, turning it once or twice, until it has completely lost its raw color. Add the tomatoes with their juices, then turn the heat down some more to cook at a gentle simmer for about 20 minutes.

7. When the peppers are done, transfer the contents of the skillet with the veal to the pan with the peppers, turning all the ingredients over two or three times

to coat them well. Cook at a gentle simmer for 15 minutes, stirring from time to time. Taste and correct for salt. Serve with the pasta of your choice, topped with the parmigiano-reggiano.

30-MINUTE MOZZARELLA

MAKES $\frac{3}{4}$ —1 LB.

SOURCES FOR the ingredients, advice, and supplies necessary for home cheese making are available from the New England Cheesemaking Supply Company (cheesemaking.com; 413/628-3808).

- 2 level tsp. citric acid
- 1 gallon pasteurized whole milk
- $\frac{1}{8}$ – $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp. lipase powder, dissolved in $\frac{1}{4}$ cup cool water and allowed to sit for 20 minutes, for a stronger flavor (optional)
- $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp. liquid rennet (or $\frac{1}{4}$ rennet tablet) diluted in $\frac{1}{4}$ cup cool, unchlorinated water
- 1 tsp. cheese salt (optional)

1. Add the citric acid to the milk and mix thoroughly. (If using lipase, add it now.)
2. Heat the milk to 88°. (The milk will start to curdle.)
3. Gently stir in the diluted rennet with an up-and-down motion and continue heating until the temperature reaches 105°. Turn off the heat and let the curd set until you get a clean break. This will take only a few minutes.



4. The curds should look like thick yogurt. If the whey is still milky white, wait a few more minutes.

5. Scoop out the curds with a slotted spoon and put into a 2-quart microwavable bowl. Press the curds gently with your hands, pouring off as much whey as possible. Reserve the whey.

6. You may want to put on heavy rubber gloves at this point; the cheese has to be almost too hot to touch before it will stretch. Microwave the curds on high for 1 minute (or see the non-microwave variation, below). More whey will precipitate from the curd. Again, drain off all excess whey. Quickly work the cheese with a spoon or your hands, forming it into a ball until it is cool enough to touch.

7. Microwave 2 more times for 35 seconds each. After each heating, work the cheese into a ball until it is cool enough to touch. Drain all excess whey each time.

8. Knead cheese quickly like bread dough until it is smooth. Sprinkle on the salt, if desired, while you are kneading and stretching. When the cheese stretches like taffy, it is done. If it breaks, the curds need to be reheated.

9. When the cheese is smooth and shiny, it is ready to eat. Although this mozzarella is best eaten right away, if you must wait, cover it and store in the refrigerator.

NON-MICROWAVE VARIATION: Heat the reserved whey to at least 175°. Add $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of cheese salt to the whey. Shape the curd into 1 or more balls, put them into a ladle or strainer, and dip them into the hot whey for several seconds. Knead the curd with spoons between each dip and repeat this process several times until the curd is smooth and pliable.

THREE-CHEESE MIXTURE

MAKES 1 CUP

DURING WORLD WAR II, when imported parmesan was scarce, California's Italians turned to monterey jack. They coated it

with cocoa, pepper and olive oil and aged it for at least nine months. The result was a hard, nutty cheese similar to its Italian cousin. Parmesan is now plentiful, but monterey jack still has its place in Italian-American cooking, thanks to this delightfully cheesy mix.

- $\frac{1}{3}$ cup parmesan cheese
- $\frac{1}{3}$ cup romano cheese
- $\frac{1}{3}$ cup dry monterey jack

1. Grate the cheeses by hand or in a food processor. Mix them well and store in a covered container up to three months.



METHOD

Italian-Style Béchamel Sauce

(Besciamella)

Makes 2 cups

Although widely recognized by its French name, béchamel, this sauce has been known in Italy as besciamella (or balsamella or bechimella) for centuries. The sauce functions as a binding element in many pasta and vegetable dishes. It is also used as a topping in baked dishes—most notably lasagne and cannelloni—to prevent them from drying out.

Melt 3 tbsp. butter in a heavy medium saucepan over medium-low heat. Add 4 tbsp. sifted flour and whisk for $1\frac{1}{2}$ minutes (do not allow to brown). Gradually add 2 cups hot milk, whisking constantly. Season to taste with salt and pepper and stir constantly with a wooden spoon until sauce is the consistency of thick cream, about 15 minutes.

RAW VEGETABLES WITH WARM ANCHOVY- GARLIC SAUCE

(Bagna Cauda)

SERVES 8

IN PIEDMONT, winemakers celebrate the end of the grape harvest each year with a dinner that traditionally begins with bagna cauda and ends—according to Piedmontese tradition—with eggs scrambled in the last traces of the sauce.

4 stalks cardoons, washed
Juice of 3 lemons
1/2 cup butter
10 garlic cloves, peeled and thinly sliced
24 oil-packed anchovies, chopped
2 cups extra-virgin olive oil
Salt and freshly ground black pepper
4-6 lbs. assorted raw vegetables, at least four varieties—such as fennel, baby artichokes, Belgian endive, carrots, radicchio, and celery—washed, trimmed, and cut into pieces

1. If using cardoons, first wash them and remove and discard outer stalks. Trim thorns and stringy fibers, cut cardoons into 2" pieces, and place in a pot of salted water with the lemon juice. Bring to a simmer over medium-high heat and cook until cardoons are tender, about 30 minutes. Drain, cool, and dry with paper towels.

2. To make the sauce, melt butter in a small saucepan over low heat. Add garlic and cook until garlic softens, about 3 minutes. Add anchovies and drizzle in olive oil. Cook over low heat, stirring, until flavors are blended, 10–15 minutes. Season with salt and pepper and keep warm.

3. Serve with cardoons and your choice of an assortment of raw vegetables (as suggested above).

FRESH PASTA FOR CANNELLONI

SERVES 4 – 6

AT LA SCALDAVIVANDI, a Roman cooking school, students were taught that this pasta should be made thin enough that one can read a newspaper through it.

1 1/4-1 1/2 cups unbleached all-purpose flour
2 eggs

1. Put 1 1/4 cups of the flour on a smooth work surface and shape into a mound. Make a well in the center of the flour. Break eggs into the well and beat with your fingers or a fork, then continue beating while gradually incorporating flour, pulling a little at a time from the inside wall of the well, while cupping the outside of the well with your other hand to prevent the eggs from leaking out. Continue beating in flour until eggs are no longer runny. Pull remaining flour into the center and knead, adding a little more flour if dough is sticky, until dough forms a ball. Scrape any flour and dried bits of dough from work surface, then



METHOD

Essential Polenta

Historically, Venetians ate very little pasta, not as much rice as they do now, and acres of polenta—which is (unromantic as this might sound) basically cornmeal mush. This satisfying, versatile starch tends to intimidate cooks who haven't grown up making it, but is really quite easy to master—and well worth the trouble.

POLENTA TYPES: Like American cornmeal, polenta comes in yellow and white versions. The yellow has an intense corn flavor while the white—which Venetians prefer—is more subtle and delicate. And the instant polenta you find at the store? “A perversion!” exclaims Cesare Benelli of Al Covo restaurant in Venice. “It’s cooked and dehydrated—like powdered mashed potatoes!”

POLENTA TIPS: To avoid lumps, add the polenta all at once to cold water and whisk it in vigorously—though traditionalists recommend sifting polenta into boiling, salted water through your fingers, whisking all the while. To prevent a crust from forming, continue stirring with a wooden spoon until the polenta begins to boil.

continue kneading dough until silky smooth, about 10 minutes.

2. Divide dough into 3 balls and flatten each into a rectangle. Cover with plastic and set aside for 30 minutes.

3. Working with 1 rectangle at a time, feed the wide side of the pasta through the smooth cylinders of a hand-crank pasta machine set on the widest setting. Decrease the setting by one notch and feed the narrow end of the pasta through the cylinders again. Repeat, decreasing setting by one notch each time. On final setting, dough will come out in a long thin sheet. Cut pasta into 4" × 5" rectangles for cannelloni.

SPINACH PASTA

(Pasta Verde)

MAKES 4 6" × 22" SHEETS

ASK ANY LOCAL—the lasagne of Emilia-Romagna requires fresh pasta. When assembling the dish, let the top sheet of pasta drape over the edge; it creates a crispy crust that is delicious to eat.

2 bunches spinach, washed and trimmed

2 cups unbleached all-purpose flour

2 eggs, lightly beaten

1. Put $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of water into a large pot and bring to a boil over medium-high heat. Add spinach and cook until completely wilted, about 3 minutes. Drain in a colander and, when cool enough to handle, squeeze out water. Finely chop spinach and set aside.

2. Sift flour into a mound on a clean surface. Use your hand to make a well in the center. Add spinach to the well **(A)**, then add eggs and lightly beat together with a fork. Continue beating, gradually incorporating flour from the inside edge of the well into spinach mixture. When dough becomes too stiff to work with the fork, knead flour into spinach mixture with both hands **(B)** until dough is no longer sticky. Form dough into a ball **(C)** and cover with a damp kitchen towel. Clean work surface, then dust with more flour. Uncover dough and knead with the heel of your hand until smooth, about 5 minutes. Cut dough into 4 pieces and cover with a damp kitchen towel.

3. Working with 1 piece of dough at a time, flatten dough so it will fit through the rollers of a hand-crank pasta machine. Set rollers on widest setting, then feed pasta through rollers 3 or 4 times, folding and turning pasta until it is smooth and the width of the machine. Decrease the setting by one notch and feed narrow end of the pasta through rollers **(D)**. Repeat, decreasing setting by one notch each time until you get to last notch. (Don't roll pasta through last setting or it will be too thin.) Cover pasta sheets with damp kitchen towels to keep from drying out until ready to use in Baked Spinach Lasagne (see recipe, page 26), or cut into other pasta shapes.



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